RITU NANDA

RAJ KAPOOR
speaks

Raj Kapoor, the creator of such classics of the silver screen as *Awara*, *Aag* and *Sangam*, is many things to many people - producer, director, actor, editor, musician, storyteller, a man of many moods, and an acknowledged patriarch of India's film industry. He is also known to the world as an extraordinary and controversial showman, a lover, an idealist, a reformer. There will be endless debates about his exact contribution to the art of film-making, but few can deny that he was the greatest entertainer of Hindi cinema. He worked within the cinematic tradition he inherited, modified it, added new elements to it, and thus produced a distinctive, seductively romantic and immensely popular oeuvre.

In this pictorial tribute, his daughter Ritu Nanda uses his own words, culled from interviews, journals and anecdotes, to give us a unique 'autobiography'. As revealing as it is engaging, this is a fascinating record for posterity of the life and work of the man widely regarded as 'the last true movie mogul of Indian cinema'.

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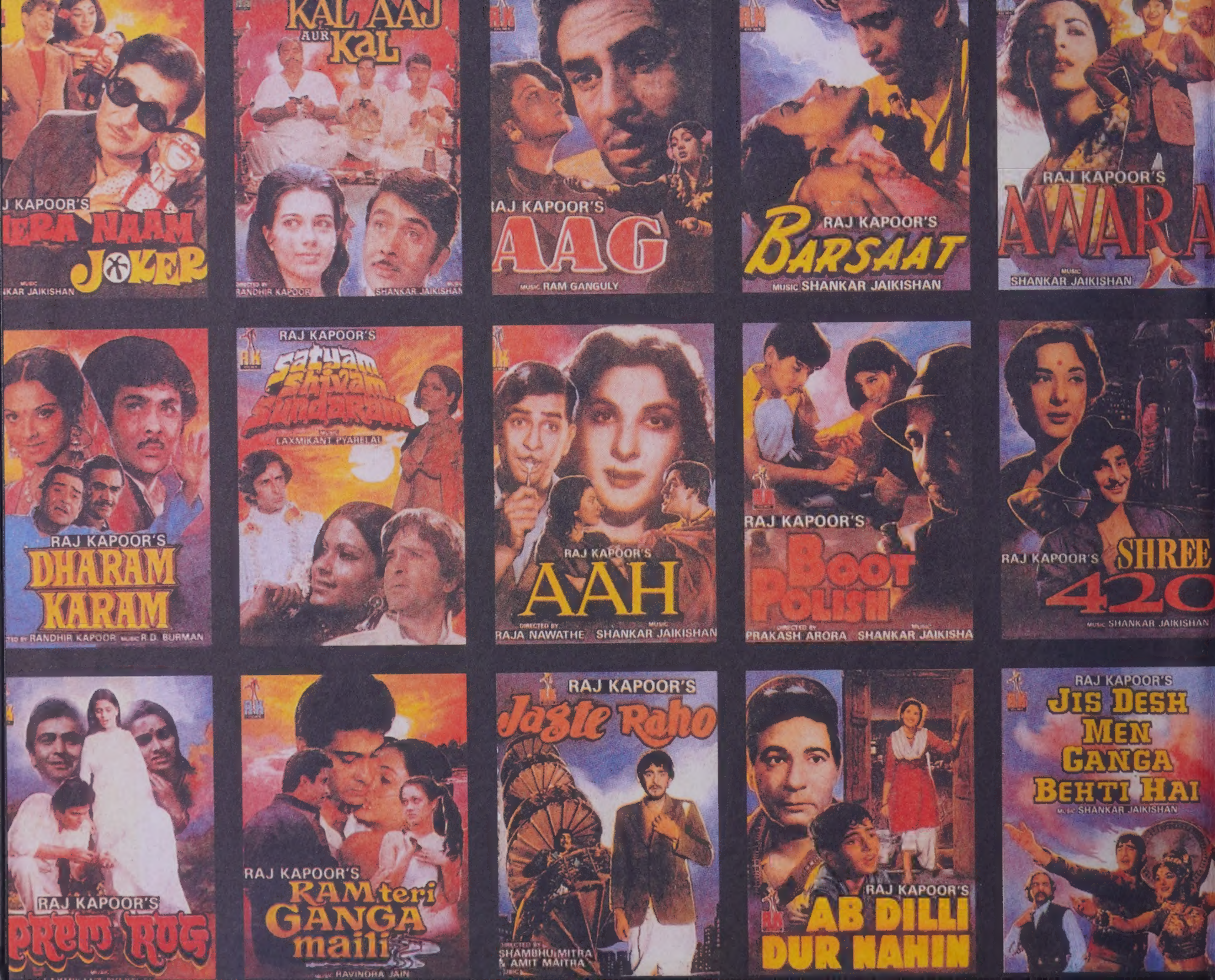
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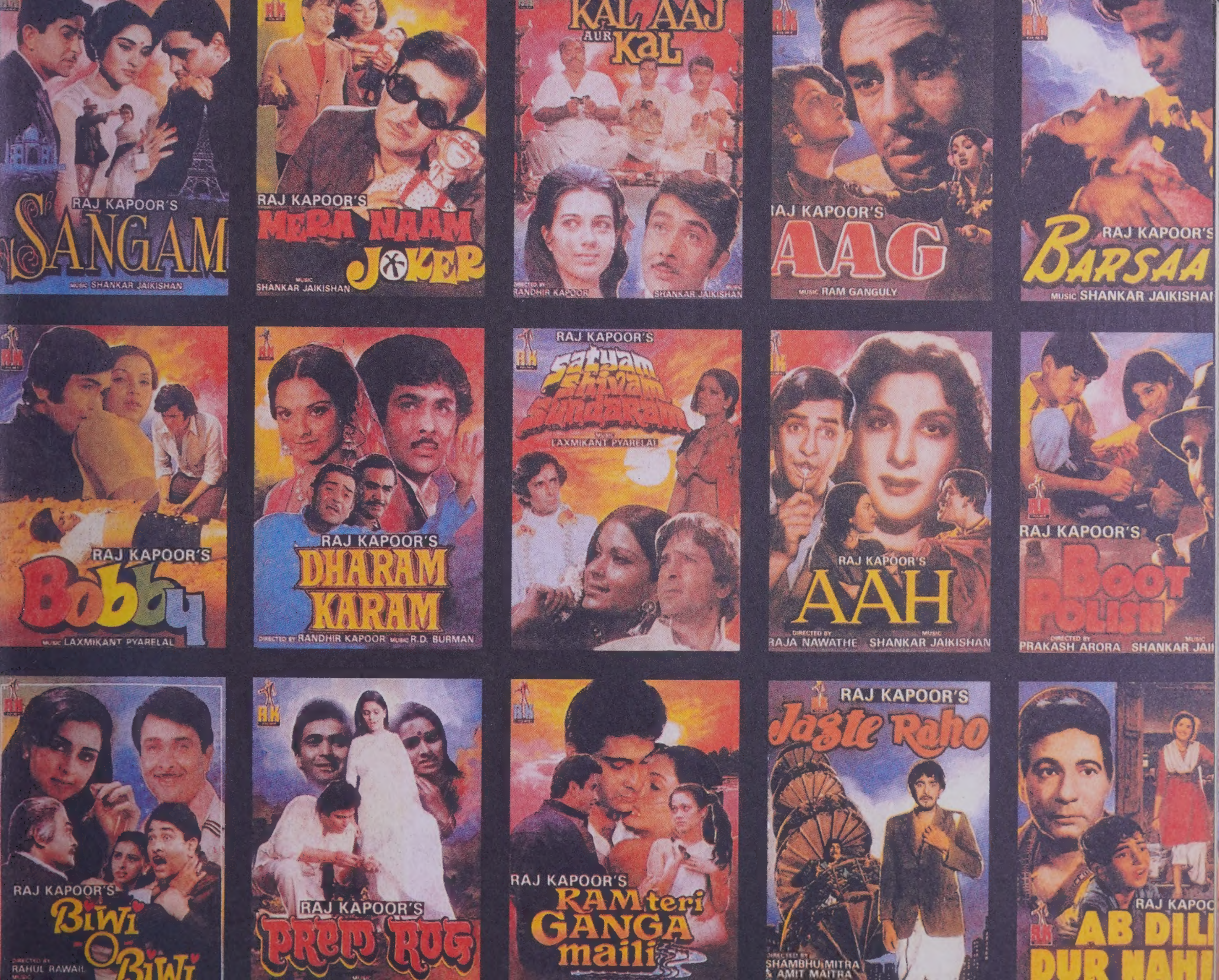
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RAJ KAPOO
AB DILI DUR NAHI

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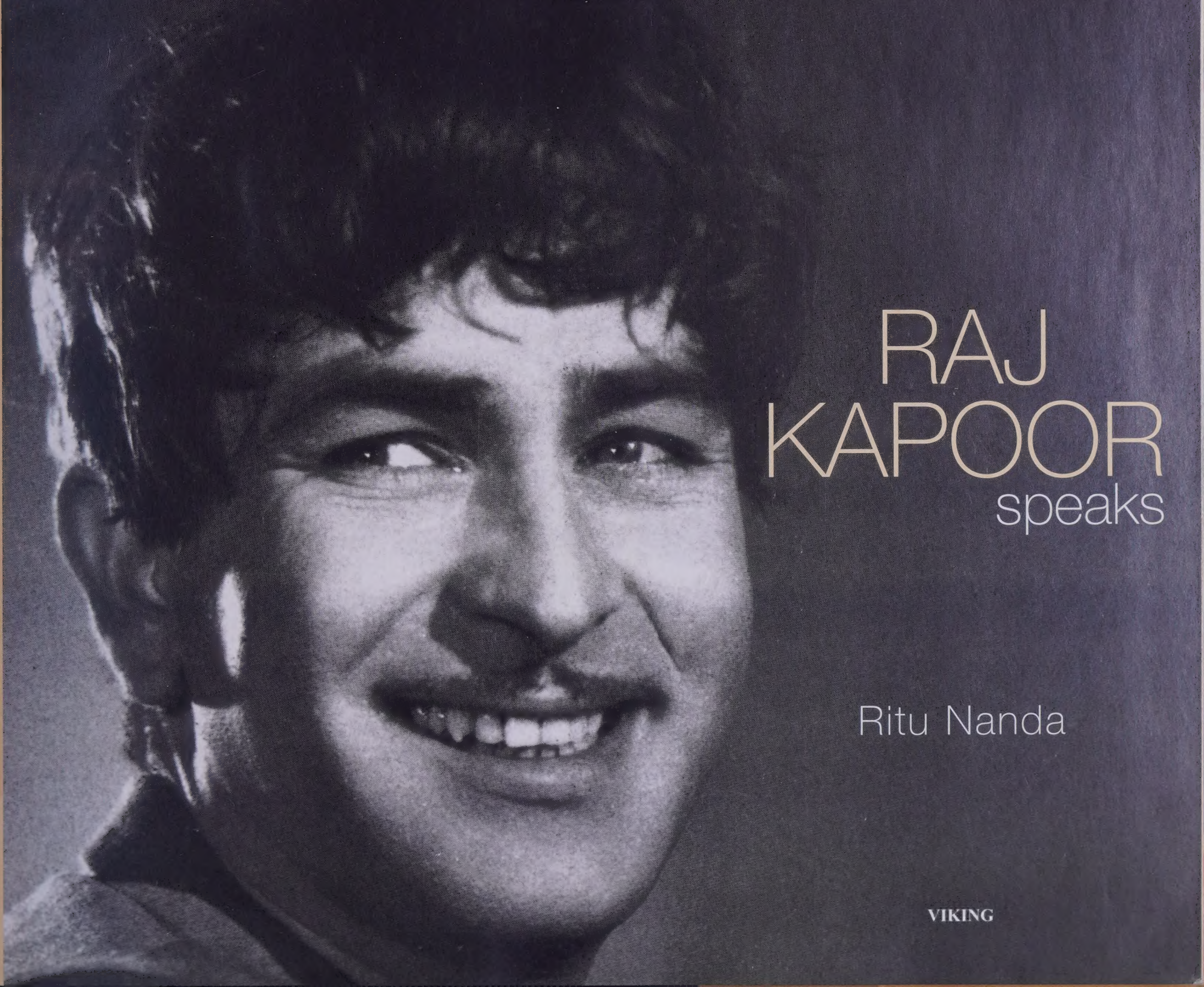
This book is dedicated
to my mother who, like
her children, believes
that Raj Kapoor is a
man who cannot die.

Presented by his daughter Ritu Nanda



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“A lot of work of every artiste, of anyone
in any creative profession, is somewhat
autobiographical...
Something of his experience is always
attached to it, it remains there and
one brings it out in one form or another.
That is how it is.”

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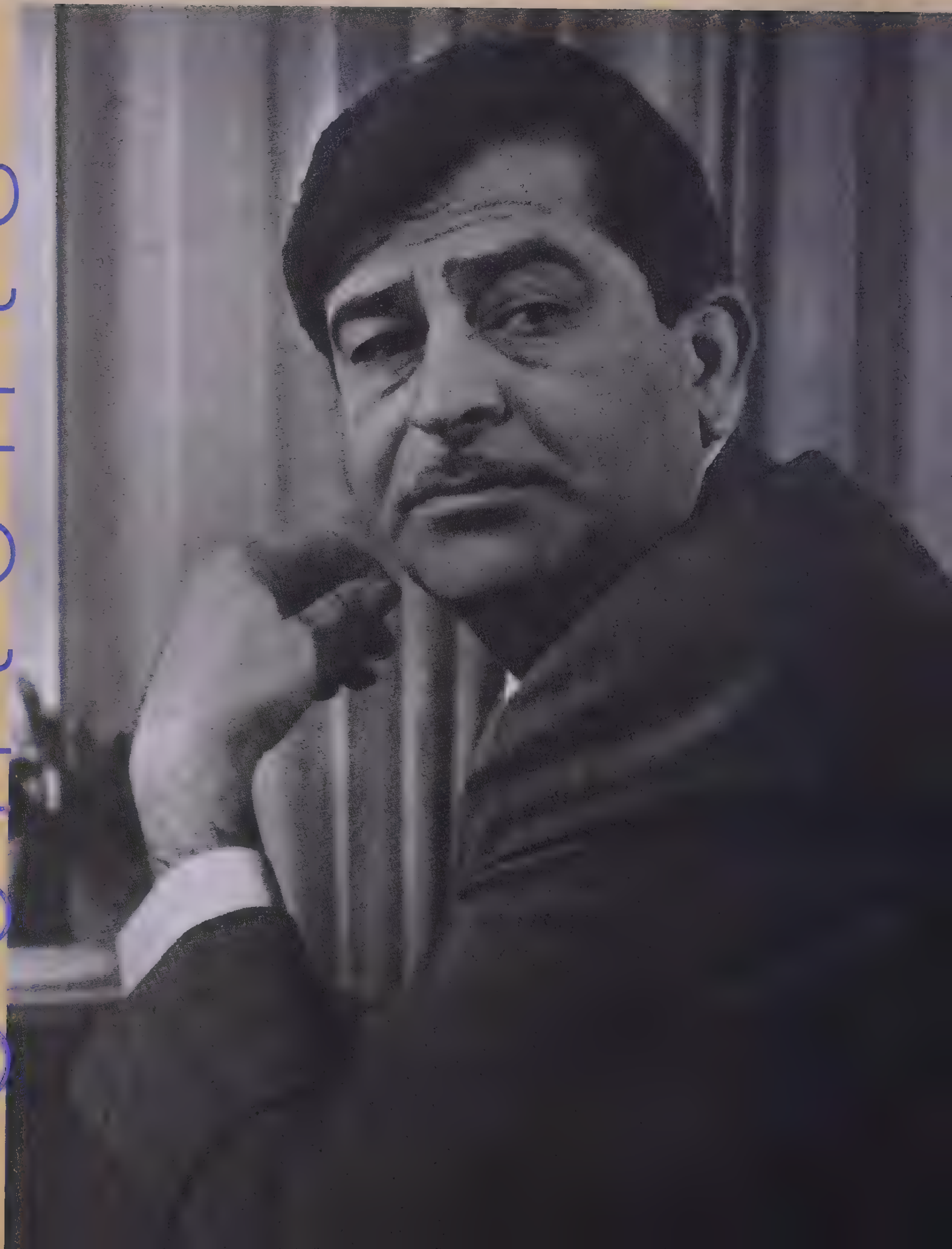

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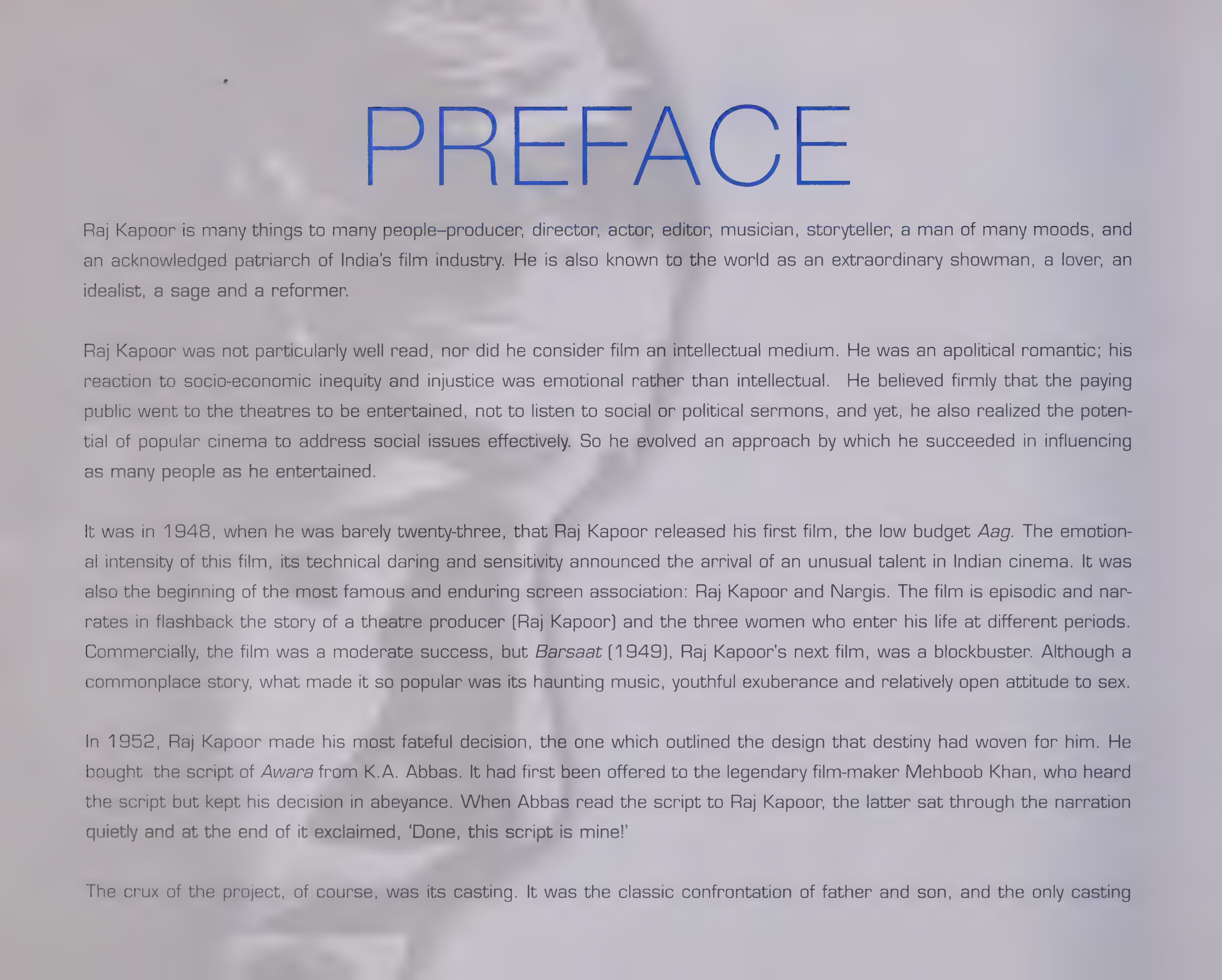


PREFACE

Raj Kapoor is many things to many people–producer, director, actor, editor, musician, storyteller, a man of many moods, and an acknowledged patriarch of India's film industry. He is also known to the world as an extraordinary showman, a lover, an idealist, a sage and a reformer.

Raj Kapoor was not particularly well read, nor did he consider film an intellectual medium. He was an apolitical romantic; his reaction to socio-economic inequity and injustice was emotional rather than intellectual. He believed firmly that the paying public went to the theatres to be entertained, not to listen to social or political sermons, and yet, he also realized the potential of popular cinema to address social issues effectively. So he evolved an approach by which he succeeded in influencing as many people as he entertained.

It was in 1948, when he was barely twenty-three, that Raj Kapoor released his first film, the low budget *Aag*. The emotional intensity of this film, its technical daring and sensitivity announced the arrival of an unusual talent in Indian cinema. It was also the beginning of the most famous and enduring screen association: Raj Kapoor and Nargis. The film is episodic and narrates in flashback the story of a theatre producer (Raj Kapoor) and the three women who enter his life at different periods. Commercially, the film was a moderate success, but *Barsaat* (1949), Raj Kapoor's next film, was a blockbuster. Although a commonplace story, what made it so popular was its haunting music, youthful exuberance and relatively open attitude to sex.

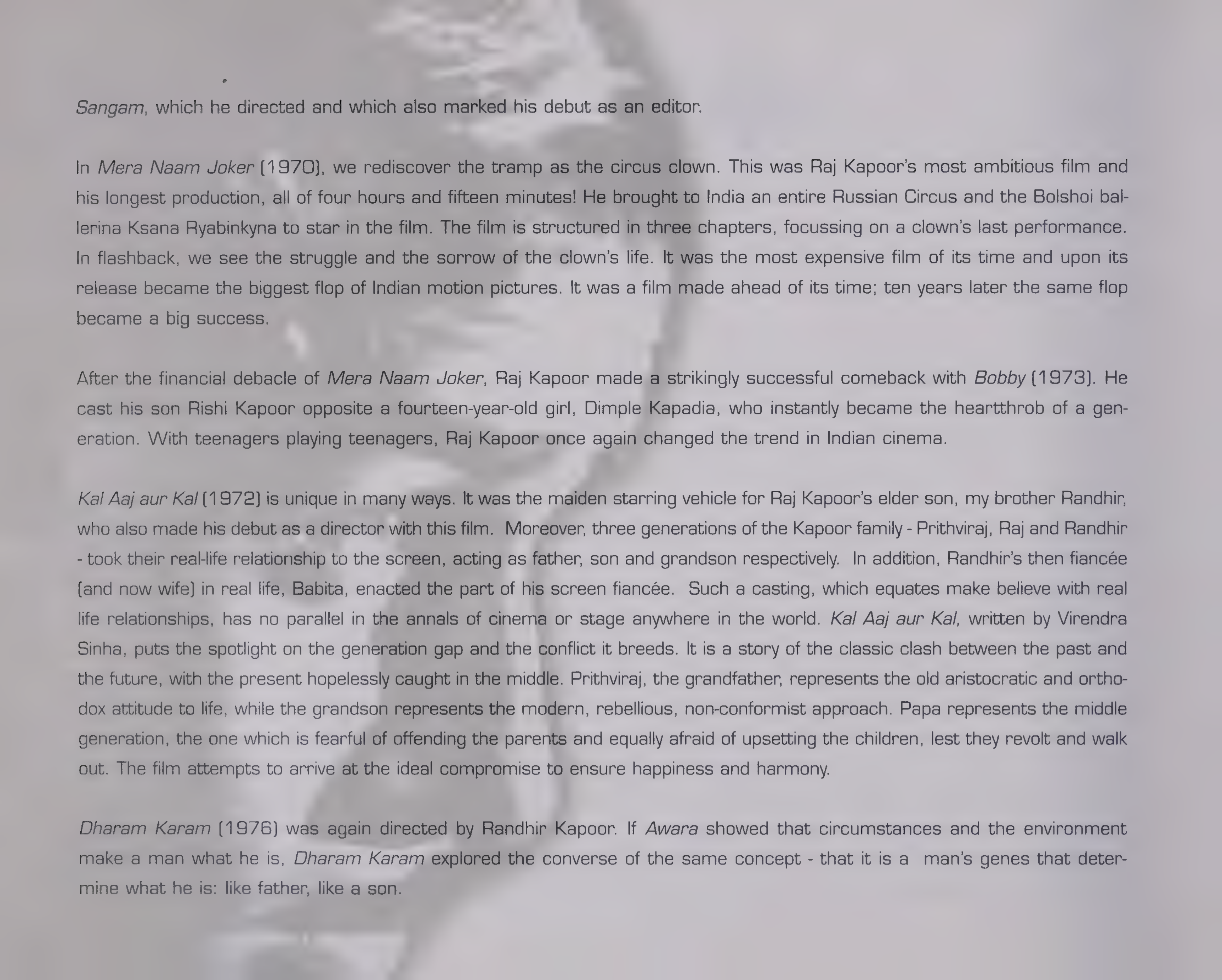
In 1952, Raj Kapoor made his most fateful decision, the one which outlined the design that destiny had woven for him. He bought the script of *Awara* from K.A. Abbas. It had first been offered to the legendary film-maker Mehboob Khan, who heard the script but kept his decision in abeyance. When Abbas read the script to Raj Kapoor, the latter sat through the narration quietly and at the end of it exclaimed, 'Done, this script is mine!'

The crux of the project, of course, was its casting. It was the classic confrontation of father and son, and the only casting that made sense, in terms of showmanship, was Prithviraj and Raj Kapoor. It was difficult to get the thespian of the Indian film industry, Prithviraj, to agree. He resisted accepting the role at first, saying, 'Prithviraj does not play the role of the hero's father.' Abbas promptly retorted, 'No, you are not playing the hero's father. It is Raj Kapoor who is playing the hero's son!' The filming of *Awara* was thus started. The film turned out to be an astonishing mixture of melodrama and romance, which seduced audiences not just in India, but also in the Middle East, Iran, Turkey, China and the former Soviet Union. In post-World War II, post-Partition India, when the entire socio-political system was under strain and thousands of migrants were pouring into the cities, millions identified with Raj Kapoor's dispossessed hero Raju.

The tramp of *Awara* reappeared in *Shri 420,* but with a difference. The film is a fascinating study of his transformation from the naïve country lad to the city slicker. *Jagte Raho* (1956) was a less effective variation on the same theme of the simple man in the big, bad world. The film won the Grand Prix at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in 1957, but did not fare well at the box office. It also marked the end of Nargis' association with Raj Kapoor. His last meeting with her was in Berlin, when he was on his way to Karlovy Vary and she was on her way back home.

The theme of *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* (1960) was inspired by the Gandhian pacifist Vinoba Bhave, who had just appealed to the dacoits operating in the ravines of Central India to surrender, to which some had responded positively. This message had a deep relevance and appeal to the period in which the film was made and proved to the world that even hardened criminals can mend their ways when approached with a sympathetic and productive vision.

In 1964, Raj Kapoor went to Europe for his super production *Sangam*. Shot in locations as varied as London, Paris, Venice, and Switzerland, it was his first foray into colour and he did it with typical fastidiousness. The film was obviously designed by the maker to be a visual seduction all the way, dripping with glamour. Film-makers the world over have been at pains to prove that Rudyard Kipling, who said that 'east is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet', should have known better. In India it was left to Raj Kapoor to explore the Kipling myth with spectacular results. That is the achievement of *Sangam* (literally, Confluence), which attempts and accomplishes a fusion not only of the east and the west but also of art and entertainment. It was Earst Lubitch, master comedy-maker, who once said that no man is a genius unless he can deliver honest entertainment. Papa's genius as a creative craftsman and an honest, solid entertainer was never better reflected than in



Sangam, which he directed and which also marked his debut as an editor.

In *Mera Naam Joker* (1970), we rediscover the tramp as the circus clown. This was Raj Kapoor's most ambitious film and his longest production, all of four hours and fifteen minutes! He brought to India an entire Russian Circus and the Bolshoi ballerina Ksana Ryabinkyna to star in the film. The film is structured in three chapters, focussing on a clown's last performance. In flashback, we see the struggle and the sorrow of the clown's life. It was the most expensive film of its time and upon its release became the biggest flop of Indian motion pictures. It was a film made ahead of its time; ten years later the same flop became a big success.

After the financial debacle of *Mera Naam Joker*, Raj Kapoor made a strikingly successful comeback with *Bobby* (1973). He cast his son Rishi Kapoor opposite a fourteen-year-old girl, Dimple Kapadia, who instantly became the heartthrob of a generation. With teenagers playing teenagers, Raj Kapoor once again changed the trend in Indian cinema.

Kal Aaj aur Kal (1972) is unique in many ways. It was the maiden starring vehicle for Raj Kapoor's elder son, my brother Randhir, who also made his debut as a director with this film. Moreover, three generations of the Kapoor family - Prithviraj, Raj and Randhir - took their real-life relationship to the screen, acting as father, son and grandson respectively. In addition, Randhir's then fiancée (and now wife) in real life, Babita, enacted the part of his screen fiancée. Such a casting, which equates make believe with real life relationships, has no parallel in the annals of cinema or stage anywhere in the world. *Kal Aaj aur Kal,* written by Virendra Sinha, puts the spotlight on the generation gap and the conflict it breeds. It is a story of the classic clash between the past and the future, with the present hopelessly caught in the middle. Prithviraj, the grandfather, represents the old aristocratic and orthodox attitude to life, while the grandson represents the modern, rebellious, non-conformist approach. Papa represents the middle generation, the one which is fearful of offending the parents and equally afraid of upsetting the children, lest they revolt and walk out. The film attempts to arrive at the ideal compromise to ensure happiness and harmony.

Dharam Karam (1976) was again directed by Randhir Kapoor. If *Awara* showed that circumstances and the environment make a man what he is, *Dharam Karam* explored the converse of the same concept - that it is a man's genes that determine what he is: like father, like a son.

Raj Kapoor's next venture, this time both as producer and director, was *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* (1978). This was a more complex film, which had as its theme the idea of inner beauty as opposed to physical beauty. To this Raj Kapoor also brought questions of sex, religion and social responsibility. It is one of Papa's most visually arresting films. He had always maintained that eroticism is a part of life; it is a part of beauty. But there was no nudity or vulgarity involved. The entire film was shot at his farm in Loni near Pune. He crafted the film with great sensitivity and love. The colours, the topography, the visuals in the film were spectacular. And music being so important to Papa, the film also had stunning music by Laxmikant-Payarelal.

As did *Prem Rog* (1982), the moving story of a young widow who suffers the indignity of rape by her brother-in-law. Combinations of tradition and modernity can be seen in a different form here. The film deals with widow remarriage. As with all traditions, Indian traditions too contain elements that are obsolete, counterproductive and harmful to modern, enlightened living. Without compromising on the story, *Prem Rog* stressed the importance of discriminating between the relevant and the obsolete, the positive and the negative elements in tradition, to eliminate what is unhealthy and cultivate what is valuable.

Ram Teri Ganga Maili (1985) was the last film Raj Kapoor completed. The idea for the film had been born several years earlier, after Raj Kapoor heard of a remark a holy man had once made to Ramakrishna Paramahansa: 'Oh Rama, how polluted is your Ganga !' The river Ganga, sacred to the Hindus, is sparkling pure at its source in the Himalayas, but as it descends to the plains, it gets polluted. The film's heroine Ganga, too, is innocent and happy in her home in the mountains, but is cheated, raped and exploited when she comes to the city in search of her missing lover. The film symbolically sought to expose the corruption and mendacity that characterize modern Indian society. In the process it generated much controversy for it's uninhibited love scenes and the near nudity of the heroine. Critics accused Raj Kapoor of voyeurism, but he remained unperturbed as the audience clearly voted for the film, which generated unprecedented box-office revenues.

Raj Kapoor's films always evoked extreme reactions, but he was never affected by this. He knew that mass audiences had made him, and he never deserted them. There will be endless debates about his exact contribution to the art of cinema, but few can deny that he was the greatest entertainer known to Indian films.

Raj Kapoor worked within the cinematic tradition he inherited, made modifications, and added new elements to it, and thus created a popular art that was in tune with his temperament and view of life. He infused popular romantic sensibility into Indian cinema. Raj Kapoor was the last true movie mogul of Indian cinema. He was imperious and majestic, a dreamer of big dreams; his creations were clearly several times larger than RK Studios, which remains a living monument to one man's vision, energy and enterprise.

* * *

To commemorate 100 years of world cinema in 1990, the then Soviet Union was honouring some film personalities of the world. Among them were Ingrid Bergman, Jean Gabin, Charlie Chaplin, Marilyn Monroe - and Raj Kapoor from India. To mark the occasion, Isskusstvo Publishing House, Moscow published the first edition of this book, originally titled *Raj Kapoor*. Over 100,000 copies were printed in the Russian language. The book was also translated into Chinese, Hindi and English.

The idea for the book was born shortly after Papa's death on 2 June 1988. A business colleague of mine, Suman Sehgal, told me that there was a requirement for a book on Raj Kapoor in the Soviet Union. I remember guiding him to contact Bunny Rueben, who besides being a dear friend and a colleague of my father's was also the author of a biography, *Raj Kapoor: The Fabulous Showman*, which had been completed in Papa's lifetime and published shortly after his death. But the new proposal was not commercially viable for Bunny Rueben, and Suman Seghal came back to me for further advice.

I then advised him to approach Simi Garewal. She too was a very dear friend of Papa's, and a star colleague. She had made a documentary on Papa for BBC. Ironically, when the documentary, titled *The Living Legend,* was telecast for the first time on Indian television, Papa was battling for life at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, oscillating between what science could offer and what destiny had designed for him. There was a lot that I, Raj Kapoor's own daughter, had discovered about the legend through this wonderful documentary, and I was certain Simi would do a great book. Unfortunately, the publisher in Moscow was unable to meet the terms demanded and Suman Sehgal was back again!

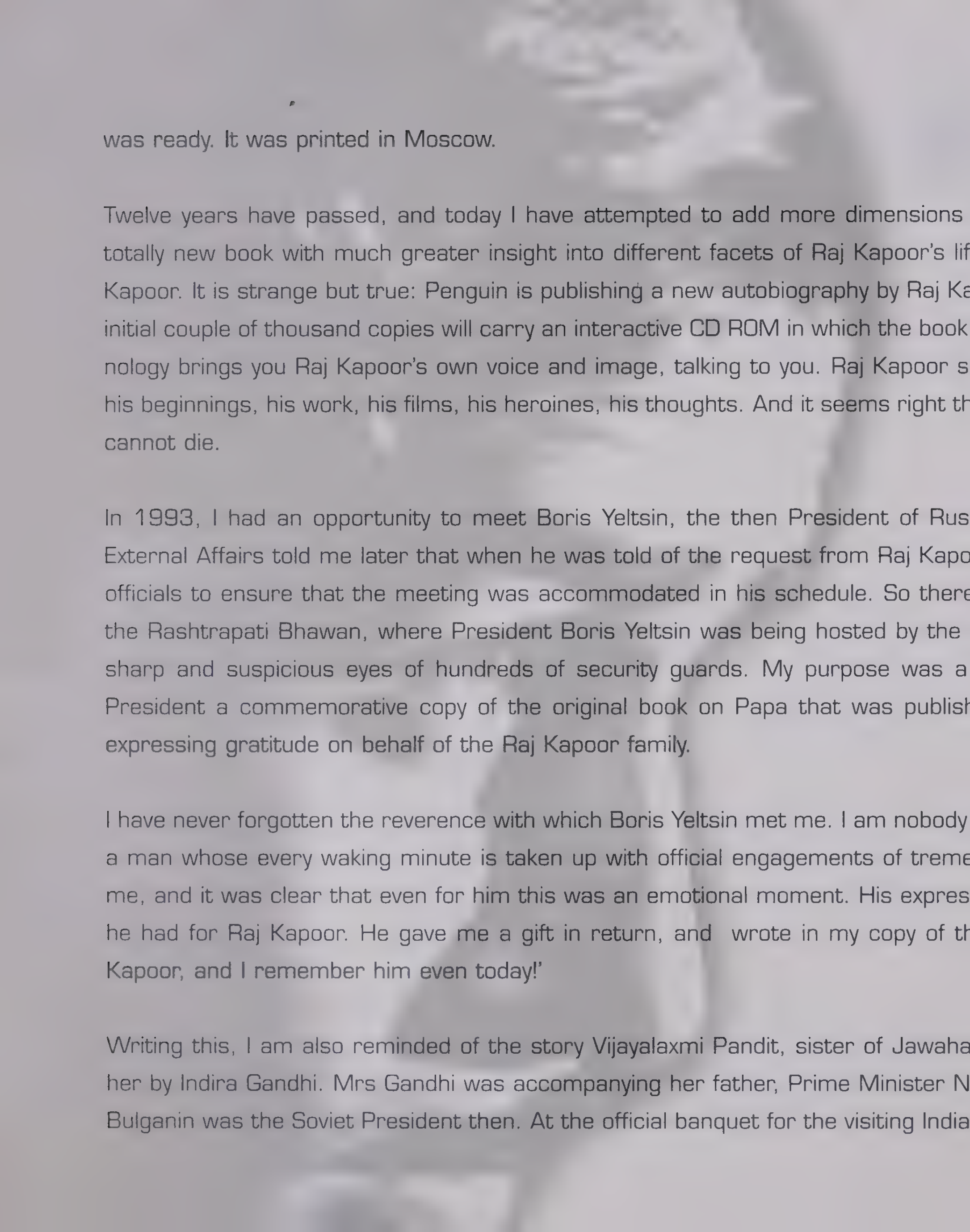
There was another book on Raj Kapoor, called *Raj Kapoor's Films: Harmony of Discourses*, by Malti Sahai and Vimal Dissanayake. It was actually a research at East West Centre in Hawaii, USA. Papa's work was used to illustrate how a true showman knows the pulse of the nation and how he uses the powerful medium of celluloid to communicate with the masses. It was a great tribute to Raj Kapoor, but the book was not a reflection of the person that Raj Kapoor was. I did not feel that this was the kind of book the Soviet publisher wanted.

It was at this stage that I thought of a photographic book on Papa. I made a dummy of the concept and sent it to the publishing house in Moscow. The project was accepted and I received a telegram stating the date the delegation from Moscow would arrive to commence work on the book! I panicked and went to a publishing friend of mine, Aroone Purie, for guidance. To my astonishment, he said, 'You do it. Put your name on it.' It had not even occurred to me to attempt such a project. I thought it was a crazy suggestion and went on with my usual preoccupations, hoping to find a suitable person to author a record of Papa's life for posterity.

The delegation arrived in Delhi. I left with them for Mumbai. My brothers at this time were busy completing my father's unfinished film *Henna*. My older brother had an assistant director called Khalid. He was also a writer. I remember requesting him to advise me on what the storyline should be. I had the concept but no clue at all what the text accompanying the pictures should be! Khalid promised to come and help me but did not keep his appointment. It seemed like a hopeless situation. I remember going to my father's room and breaking down. I wept. Here was this great honour that the Soviet Union was planning for my father, and I had kept the idea alive, but now I did not know what to do next. I was convinced I couldn't write the book myself: I might be the daughter of Raj Kapoor, but I did not know the great showman in the perspective required to produce an enduring record of his contribution to cinema.

I prayed to my Guru Shri Shirdi Sai Baba to help me. In the holy book *Sai Satcharitra,* the author addresses God in the very first chapter: 'How can I write a book on You, Almighty?' he asks. 'I am a mere human being.' God appears to him and says, 'You write and I will write through you.' I implored Sai Baba to help me likewise; I would in return offer the first copy in his name at his shrine at Shirdi in Maharashtra!

Faith is believing in something you cannot see, and the result of faith is seeing that which you believe in. It was as though God was communicating with me. Papa's video with his interview was on, and an idea flashed in my mind: Why not have Raj Kapoor write his own book? And then I became completely focussed on how I wanted to create this book. I locked myself up with the project for four months, doing research, weaving a narrative with Papa's own words, and at the end of four months the book



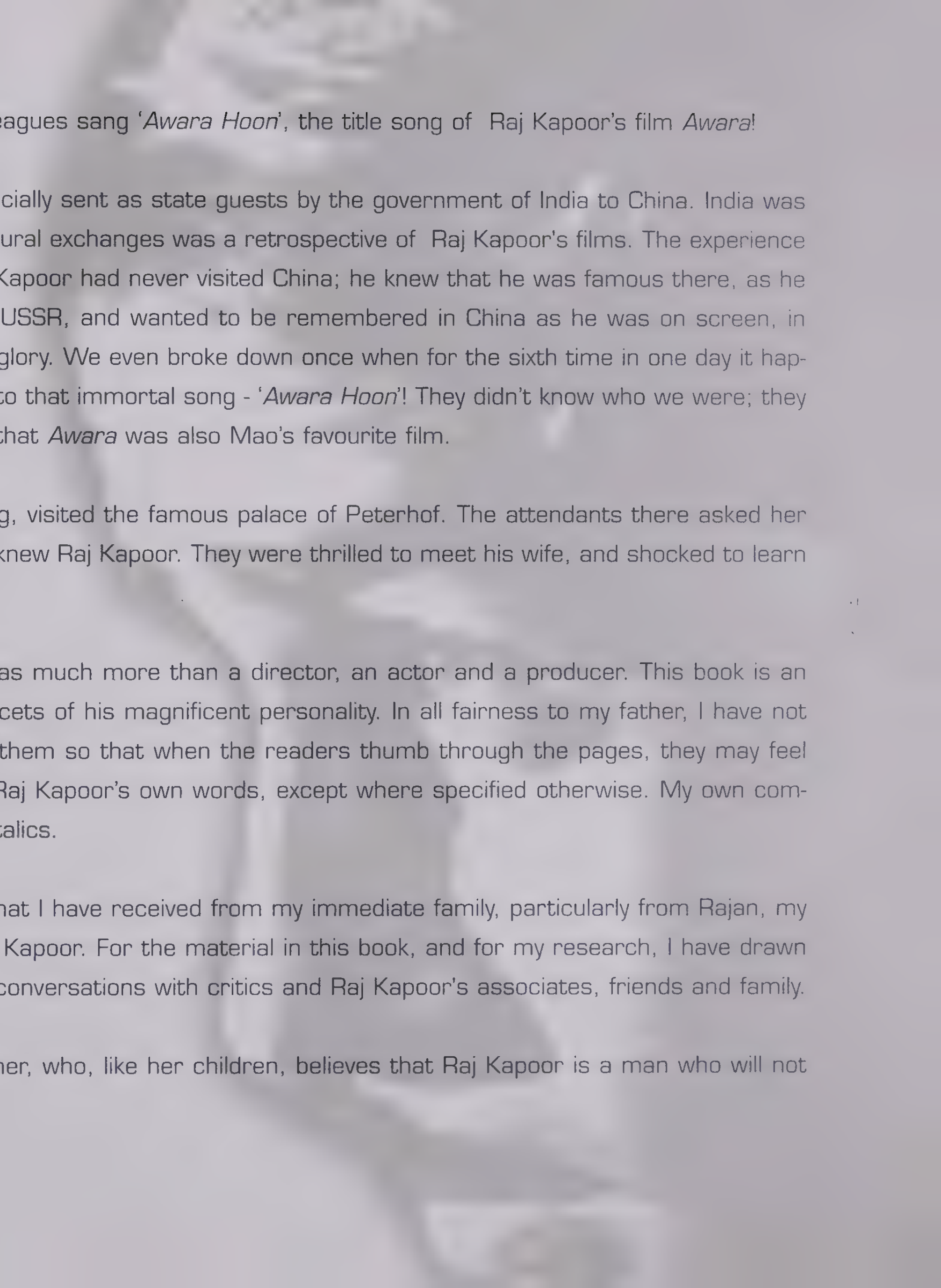
was ready. It was printed in Moscow.

Twelve years have passed, and today I have attempted to add more dimensions to the same concept. What emerges is a totally new book with much greater insight into different facets of Raj Kapoor's life and work. It is a veritable archive on Raj Kapoor. It is strange but true: Penguin is publishing a new autobiography by Raj Kapoor fourteen years after he died! Plus the initial couple of thousand copies will carry an interactive CD ROM in which the book literally comes alive, because modern technology brings you Raj Kapoor's own voice and image, talking to you. Raj Kapoor speaks! He talks to you about his childhood, his beginnings, his work, his films, his heroines, his thoughts. And it seems right that he should - after all, men like Raj Kapoor cannot die.

In 1993, I had an opportunity to meet Boris Yeltsin, the then President of Russia, when he visited India. The Ministry of External Affairs told me later that when he was told of the request from Raj Kapoor's daughter to meet him, he directed his officials to ensure that the meeting was accommodated in his schedule. So there was little me, walking up the big aisles of the Rashtrapati Bhawan, where President Boris Yeltsin was being hosted by the President of India, being scrutinized by the sharp and suspicious eyes of hundreds of security guards. My purpose was a simple one, I wanted to gift the Russian President a commemorative copy of the original book on Papa that was published in Moscow. It was my way of officially expressing gratitude on behalf of the Raj Kapoor family.

I have never forgotten the reverence with which Boris Yeltsin met me. I am nobody and Raj Kapoor is dead. But the President, a man whose every waking minute is taken up with official engagements of tremendous importance, had still made time for me, and it was clear that even for him this was an emotional moment. His expressions spoke volumes of the admiration that he had for Raj Kapoor. He gave me a gift in return, and wrote in my copy of the book: 'I was in love with your father Raj Kapoor, and I remember him even today!'

Writing this, I am also reminded of the story Vijayalaxmi Pandit, sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, told me. It had been related to her by Indira Gandhi. Mrs Gandhi was accompanying her father, Prime Minister Nehru on an official visit to the Soviet Union. Bulganin was the Soviet President then. At the official banquet for the visiting Indian Prime Minister, Bulganin, when it was his



turn to speak after Nehru, got up and with his colleagues sang '*Awara Hoon*', the title song of Raj Kapoor's film *Awara*!

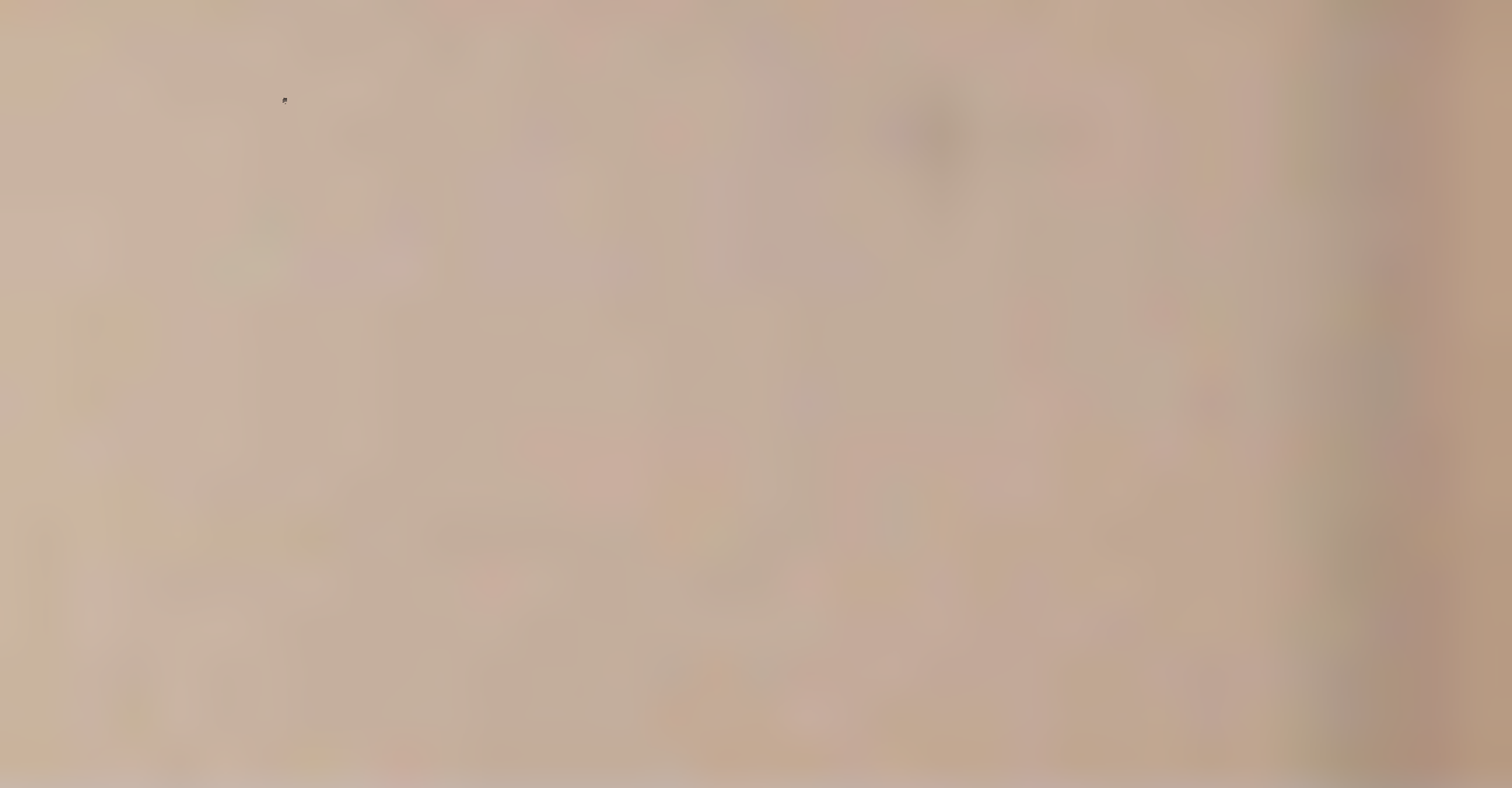
In 1996 my brother Randhir Kapoor and I were officially sent as state guests by the government of India to China. India was opening up relations with China, and part of the cultural exchanges was a retrospective of Raj Kapoor's films. The experience that we two children had in China was unreal. Raj Kapoor had never visited China; he knew that he was famous there, as he had been told that his films reached China via the USSR, and wanted to be remembered in China as he was on screen, in *Awara* and *Shree 420*. Randhir and I basked in his glory. We even broke down once when for the sixth time in one day it happened that on spotting Indians the Chinese broke into that immortal song - '*Awara Hoon*'! They didn't know who we were; they were all honouring Raj Kapoor, and India. It is said that *Awara* was also Mao's favourite film.

In 1994 my mother, while she was in St Petersburg, visited the famous palace of Peterhof. The attendants there asked her if she was Indian, and the next question was if she knew Raj Kapoor. They were thrilled to meet his wife, and shocked to learn that he was dead.

This is the legacy of Raj Kapoor. But Raj Kapoor was much more than a director, an actor and a producer. This book is an attempt to record for posterity the lesser-known facets of his magnificent personality. In all fairness to my father, I have not interpreted his thoughts, only compiled and edited them so that when the readers thumb through the pages, they may feel his presence as I do. All the text that follows is in Raj Kapoor's own words, except where specified otherwise. My own comments as an editor, where unavoidable, are set in italics.

I am grateful for the encouragement and support that I have received from my immediate family, particularly from Rajan, my husband, my friends and the extended family of Raj Kapoor. For the material in this book, and for my research, I have drawn upon Raj Kapoor's journals, his interviews, and my conversations with critics and Raj Kapoor's associates, friends and family.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to my mother, who, like her children, believes that Raj Kapoor is a man who will not die.



Among my earliest impressions of childhood is one of great intimacy with my parents. It was only natural, considering that my father was just eighteen when I was born, and my mother sixteen. The difference in age between us was so little that they could never quite overawe me.

Raj Kapoor with his parents and his only sister, Umi (1933).

CHILDHOOD

The environment I grew up in was entirely one of theatre and films. We came to Bombay in 1927. That was the era of silent films. My father joined the I. Grant Anderson Theatre, where Ardeshir Irani made the first Indian talkie, *Alam Ara*, and Father was in it. I myself was barely five when I first acted in a play, called *The Toy Cart*, for which I got my first award. It was then that the whole thing just entered me, and I could not do anything except belong to the world of show business.

I was very fair, with blue eyes. My father's actresses used to cuddle me whenever I visited the stage, and I used to feel very excited. But even that early I had learnt the art of concealing emotions. I was extremely precocious. And I was a worshipper of nudity. I think it all started because of my intimacy with my mother who was young, beautiful, and had the sharp features of a Pathan woman. We often bathed together, and seeing her in the nude must have left a deep erotic impression on my mind. There is an excellent Urdu phrase, *muqaddas uriyan* (sacred nudity), which describes this perfectly. In my films, bathing scenes recur often. Women in general occupy most of my early memories, and they appear in my films like ghosts that refuse to be buried.

We had once gone to Lyallpur in western Punjab, now in Pakistan, which is my father's birthplace. My great grandfather was the tehsildar there, and the villagers held the family in great respect. An earthen oven was always kept lit in the centre of the village, and women roasted chana on the fire. I remember hav-

Clockwise from above: Raj Kapoor's parents, Prithviraj and Ramsarni Kapoor (1954); one-year-old Raj (1925); Raj Kapoor's great-grandfather Lala Keshomal Kapoor (1880); Raj Kapoor's grandfather, Bishes Kapoor (1910)

ing gone to buy chana wearing a shirt and nothing under it. The woman at the oven had an odd smile on her face as she said: 'You don't have to pay for the chana, just raise your shirt and make a bowl out of it.' I did, and stood like that, and she laughed her head off looking at me. I was totally innocent. Years later when this memory came back to me and I understood the trick she must have been up to, it disturbed me a great deal. For some time in my life, chana itself became almost a sex object. It might have come back into my cinema at a subconscious level. There's a scene in *Bobby* when the boy flashes a mirror into Bobby's face while she's sitting in the library. The girl comes out, first in rage, then in playfulness. The boy says, 'Let's have tea.' Bobby says, 'No, let's have chana.'

I was a precocious child. I was always aware of my surroundings. In Lyallpur, my great grandfather, the tehsildar, used to go plucking cotton and we kids would go with him because it was fun. One day, probably because of the heat, I must have wandered away to rest in the shade of a tree and gone off to sleep. At sunset, they missed me. My grandmother started howling and shouting. All of a sudden Ramu, the sweeper, an untouchable, brought me home and said, 'Forgive me that I touched him. I've carried him here.' He apologized with folded hands. I was not permitted to come into the house. My mother was asked to bathe me first, because an untouchable had touched me. I didn't know the implications of all this then, but I knew that what was being done was wrong.

* * *

We lived in Calcutta for eight years, returning to Bombay when I was fourteen. We lived on Hazra Road near Kalighat. My father went to work every day on a bicycle: New Theatres was not very far away. I studied in St. Xavier's School. In my neighbourhood, everybody used to call me '*Prithvi chhele, Prithvi chhele.*' I was the pampered brat. Neighbourhood weddings, Durga puja pandals, local musical soirees—I was a permanent fixture everywhere.

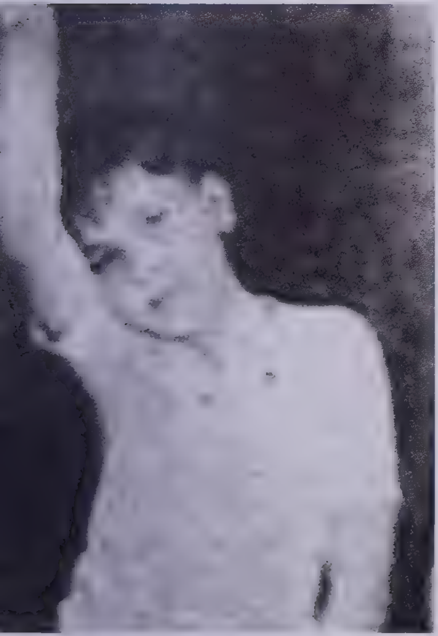
Everybody in our family is fond of food. That is the reason why the young and the old are all obese. As a child I too was very fat. My mother, giving me the example of my father, would always nag me to exercise. While sending me to school, she would pack an omelette and chapatti for me. But my taste buds were always looking for new flavours...There were three or four eating places which I used to visit regularly. My allowance was only two annas a day, which was not enough to meet this expense. So I would stop my credit at one shop and open an account at another. Once the credit got beyond my means, I would sell a book or two...I would return home from school and give back the packed meal to my mother, saying that I didn't eat it because I was on a diet. Her concern and love would make her feed me even more!

In school I was very fond of acting. My father was a great actor, so I thought that it was my privilege and my prerogative to become a great actor as well. It so happened that our school staged a passion play. The most paramount thing in my mind was that every child who worked in that passion play was given three coupons to eat sandwiches, samosas and coffee and ice cream—all sorts of beautiful things to eat. I got a costume...like a cassock that Fathers wore...a bit too long for my short size.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Anyway...we were supposed to go once or twice behind Christ, shouting hosanna...hosanna...hosanna. I did that once, I did it twice, and being an exuberant actor, I went in for the third entry which was not supposed to be there. When I entered the stage, my foot got caught in the cassock I was wearing, and I fell down right in front of a very serious Christ, and people laughed and Christ also laughed. I was happy that I had made Christ laugh. When the curtain came down, the drama master caught me by the neck. He hit me, and said, 'You are an actor? Your father is an actor? I think you are a donkey! You get out and don't come back again!' My coupons were taken away and I didn't get any sandwiches, I didn't get any ice cream...I didn't get any cake and I didn't get any samosas!

My childhood memories are pitted with the indelible scars of experience. I was a fatty. Every sort of practical joke was (played on me)...Apart from some vivid patches of happiness (my childhood years) were quite miserable. These patches of happiness were the occasions when I fell in love, but more of that later. To return to the miserable moments. I soon picked up the most natural defence mechanism - the one used by all the great jokers of the world. I learnt that the more one resisted being a target, the more one suffered. So, instead, I put on the mask of a joker by reacting as though I thoroughly enjoyed being made the butt of practical jokes. Indeed, I even took this a step further by inventing jokes on myself, which would make my colleagues laugh. You see, I was seeking that which every schoolboy seeks - the love, affection and esteem of others.



I wanted to be liked. I had an unlimited capacity to love and to be loved and it was not long before I fell in love...once, twice, thrice...and so forth. All these experiences began crystallizing into a rough and ready philosophy of life in my formative years...In (school) dramas and plays, I began to put into practice my theory of being liked and also being in the spotlight. I found that the audience at those school dramas tended to grow restive during long, dreary passages. So, right in the middle of them, I would casually do something funny and totally unrelated to the proceedings and get involuntary giggles from the frontbenchers.

I'd follow that up with another little funny thing, and the giggles would become laughter, and spread from the frontbenchers right through the house to the backbenchers. Thus I learned the rudimentary lessons in 'scene–stealing'...I began adding to my storehouse of experiences, which I was to carry forward to the time when, many years later, I moved inevitably into films.

In *Mera Naam Joker*, the child's crush on his beautiful teacher, played by Simi Garewal, is no fantasy of the scriptwriter. I was a great favourite of women teachers in every school that I attended. My first school was the New Era Boys' School on Hughes Road, Bombay, where the teachers would queue up to kiss me! I was in the prep class then, and I used to get irritated with them and ask them, 'Why do you kiss me? Are you my mother?' Undaunted, they would kiss me more! I was very fond of one of these teachers. Once we had gone out on a picnic with this teacher when we saw a large flock of birds winging into the evening sky. It came back years later in a sequence in *Mera Naam Joker* with the song '*Titar ke do aage titar...*' I got so attached to this teacher at age six, that when my father took up a job with New Theatres and we had to shift to Calcutta, I dug my

heels in, telling my parents that I would rather stay at the school hostel than pack up and leave. In my last few days in Bombay, I used to bring her flowers. It was a tearful parting.

* * *

White is my favourite colour and it is deeply rooted in my mind and in my heart...I remember to this day how the colour white came to be imprinted in my memory. We were living in Calcutta. One morning, as I was getting ready to go to school, I heard my mother tell the cook to buy chickens as some friends of my father were expected for lunch. Chicken! My mouth began to water. I decided to play truant that afternoon and return home for lunch. Father and his guests were already seated at the table when I entered the dining room. 'There is no school today?' Papa-ji asked me sternly. 'No,' I mumbled, avoiding his eye, 'it is a half-day.'

Among the guests was a young woman. She was dressed in white. I looked at her, and I could not look away. She seemed to me to be the most beautiful woman in the world. The guests stayed all afternoon and I too hung around the house. I had fallen in love with her of course.

Then it was time for them to go. They were saying farewell. I went into the garden in front of the house. I plucked some creamy white tuberoses. And I was still plucking them when the woman in white came down the steps. Stammering and blushing, I gave her the fragrant gift. She took the flowers from me, murmuring her pleasure. She walked through the garden and onto the road. Turn around, I pleaded in my heart. Just this once! Please look back! But she did not turn She was gone forever and I could not forget her. Ever since it has been an endless search for the ideal which always recedes, leaving only the white flowers as visible evidence of the search...

* * *

I remember Principal Soares. He was also the Latin teacher and Latin was the second language in those days. In the examinations, when the Latin paper came up, I wrote, 'Latin is a dead language, why dig up the buried?' I got one mark out of a hundred and that too complimentary. Principal Soares said, 'Unfortunately, boy, I can't say anything as far as your academic education is concerned. You are otherwise brilliant, and you have the world before you!'

Tomorrow I may not be there, but I will live through my children and my heritage.

Raj Kapoor with wife Krishna (1963).

FAMILY

My father, I remember, was very fond of swimming, and one day, when we were living in Calcutta, he took me along to a lake where he frequently swam. He carried me into the water in his arms and once we were in chest-deep, he let go of me. Standing on the banks, my mother began to give Papa-ji a good yelling: 'You'll kill my son like this!' But Papa-ji remained cool and unruffled and watched me fling my arms about desperately. It was not long before I got the hang of it and learnt how to swim. This was Papa-ji's attitude. He maintained this with all his children, and it is this attitude that I have adopted as well.

Papa-ji greatly enjoyed his role of a friendly father. When I was very young, he had shown me *Man to Man*, Andy Hardy's film series produced by MGM in which Mickey Rooney and Lewis Stone played father and son, treating each other as equals. Once he went to Sumatra and Bali with some delegation and returned with a nude painting as a present for me, which you will still find in my cottage, with a note that read, 'Sorry, I could not bring you a live one...'

Like a lamb following Mary, I followed my father. He came to Bombay in 1929 and began life as an unpaid extra, to achieve stardom within a few years. He starred in *Alam Ara*, India's first talkie film. It was my father who taught me that the greatest artist is one who has the ability to treat any work as if it is a part of his self, who can attract the love of others through his qualities of politeness and softness. If you can become an artist loved by all, there cannot be a greater artist than you. I started under his shadow, to learn, to educate myself. It was he who introduced me to drama and the stage. And it was from the stage that I took to the screen.

* * *

'I have forty-odd years of memories; I could talk of Raju for as many years perhaps and still not exhaust my stock!' Prithviraj Kapoor recalled in the mid-1960s. 'When my wife (Ramsarni Kapoor) was expecting our first child, I had predicted that it would be a boy. I had written the name 'Ranbir Raj', chosen by me for the boy, on a slip of paper and put it under Ramsarni's pillow...Raj was a lovely child with blue eyes and ruddy cheeks. The eyes were probably inherited from his great grandfather. His cheeks were so markedly ruddy, Ramsarni would rub them with a wet cloth on the assumption that it was dust settled on the child's face! Years later, all

three of us were in Moscow. Raju was a juror at the film festival. I was shooting for *Pardesi* and my wife was with me. Russian girls at the festival hall were mobbing Raj and when I extricated him at my wife's bidding and brought him to her she again wiped his cheeks. This time the colour did come off—it was all lipstick!

'At Peshawar, where Raj was born, and places like Samundari where he would go on family visits, the child was popular with everyone at home and outside. He was - what is the expression? - "the apple of everyone's eye". Even the tradesmen enjoyed making him sing and dance. They would not take money for some little thing he wanted from their shop. Raj's musical talent is not so well known. When he was quite young, he gave what could be described as his first major public performance, singing two songs from the film *Hamari Baat* at a variety show at the hill station of Murree on the Frontier. This went down well and Raj was subsequently much in demand. His songs in the play *Deewar* were recorded but the discs probably never reached the market.

'When Raj was about seven, he came to the studio where I was shooting one evening, accompanied by a servant, and said that Bindu, his brother, was ill. He would not say a word more. But since his mother had sent him in a taxi which was normally a luxury for us those days, I immediately sensed something serious had happened. Four-year-old Bindu (Ravinder) had gone to play in a neighbour's garden in the suburb of Khar where we then lived. His mother called him for his bath. He came up, choked and died in her arms. The doctor surmised it was a case of snakebite, but the theory gained ground that the child had accidentally swallowed one of the sweetened pills the neighbour used for killing rats. Tragedy again struck the family, within a fortnight. Another child, Devender, younger to Bindu, took ill with high fever and died. I have never forgotten the faces of those children or of Raj as he came to the studio that day.

'Raj was a good student, tops in English and very good in acting and directing school plays and winning prizes in elocution competitions. But he failed to matriculate. What was probably his undoing was his weakness in arithmetic and Latin! A year before Raj should have matriculated, I called him for a "man-to-man" chat, complimenting him for his attainments in extra-curricular activities but warning him that he should make up for his weakness in certain classroom subjects. My own father had recently asked me to meet the principal of the school and "put in a word" on behalf of (my younger brother) Vishi (who) was not expected to get his form for the matriculation examination...But I had no intention of similarly interceding on behalf of my own son, so I told him to promise me that he would get his form himself and never ask me to get it for him. Raj promised. Some days later, my wife came to me saying that it was doubtful Raj would be allowed to sit for his matriculation and that I should meet the principal. I smiled, and told her, of course, I would do it. Only, let Raj come and ask me himself. He never did.

'Raj was like that. I remember - though as a reigning star those days I could have provided my sons with many luxuries, I never did, and Raj took a tram to school, like the other boys. One rainy morning, when my wife asked permission to send Raj to school in the family car, I told her, 'You know, everyone has some priceless experiences. On a rainy day like this, there is a great thrill in walking the streets...it is fun. But today, of course, it is raining very hard and Raju is getting late, so let him take the car." Raj was within hearing. He said to me, "No sir, I will take the tram." As we stood watching the boy off from the balcony, I said to my wife, "Don't worry about the car. Here is a boy who has just booked himself cars much fancier than any his father has or will ever have."

'After the fiasco of the matriculation examinations, Raj came to me for a “man-to-man” chat, this time on his own initiative. “I can, of course, continue my studies,” he said, “but all I'll learn is how to wear clothes in style and perhaps get a degree after which I will again come to you asking you to get me a job.” Instead of which (he) wanted to start working right away - in films. I smiled, remembering the hue and cry in my own family when I took to films. I gave my son some 300 rupees and told him to visit all the family units at such places as Lahore, Sheikhpura, Samundari and Dehradun. “When you return, if you still want to join films, I will help you to get started.”

'All our relatives welcomed Raj with great affection. He was always fond of eating. They plied him with all sorts of delicacies as a result of which he got dysentery. Raju survived this as well as the opposition put up against a film career. He came back and told me he hadn't changed his mind. So I spoke to Chandulal Shah and got a job for Raj at Ranjit Studios. I laid down two conditions. One, that he should not be paid any salary, and the other was that he should be treated like any other worker at the studio and not as Prithviraj's son. At home, I briefed my son that his monthly pocket allowance would now be increased from rupees fifteen to rupees thirty. "To get ready for your working life," I told him, "you will please ask your mother to stitch as many white pants and shirts as you need. Go in the morning wearing white and return in the evening with your clothes full of the red dust of the studio." Raj's daily lunch would not be sent to him at the studio. The young man, if he so chose, could have a packed lunch made at home in the morning, to be carried by himself. Or he could eat at any hotel near the studio, paying for it from his own pocket money.

'At Ranjit, Raj worked as an assistant to director Kidar Sharma, who later was to give him his first break as a leading man in *Neel Kamal*...Raj had already got a brief scene in a Kidar Sharma film called *Gauri* that I had done. But this was not his very first appearance. Earlier, when I was working in Calcutta, the noted filmmaker Debaki Bose had used Raj, then just a boy, for a small appearance in *After the Earthquake*. Subsequently Gul Hamid, the actor-director, took Raj away from me for some shooting but I have lost track of what he did. I didn't want to make a child star of Raj. I did not want any of my sons to go through what Jackie Cogan did - early glory followed by difficulties in later life.

'After about a year at Ranjit, Raj joined Bombay Talkies, following an advertisement from the studio for applicants in both its acting and production departments. Raj was a salaried employee here. Raj set to work with his usual enthusiasm. But after a period of work at the studio, he was disappointed at not being able to get a starring role - all that came his way were one or two brief appearances in films. He asked my permission to join Prithvi Theatres. It was granted. Raj worked as a general assistant in all departments. I fixed his salary at Rs 201 a month, a token rupee more than his salary at Bombay Talkies by way of encouragement.

'At the theatre, Raj's younger brother Shammi got an acting break earlier than Raj. Raj got his with *Deewar*. All the pent-up force of years was released; with his performance on the opening day of *Deewar*, Raj proved a revelation to all.'

* * *

Raj Kapoor would touch his parents' feet reverently. This was one thing he never missed anywhere, any time. He would often remember his father as having said, 'Today people remark that Raj Kapoor is the son of Prithviraj Kapoor, but a time will come when people will say, there goes Prithviraj Kapoor, the father of Raj Kapoor. That will be the biggest day in my life.'

I had two younger brothers. One was named Ravinder and the other Devender. Ravinder, whom everyone called Bindi, was far more stable, serious-minded and sensible than I. One day, Papa-ji was away at the studios when Bindi suddenly took ill. He had swallowed rat poison by mistake. He died. Then Devender died too within the span of a week - he had pneumonia. I was all alone...then Shammi was born and later Shashi. Ever since, our relationship has been very close.

Shammi is very dear to me. But all those years, when he was a top star, I never had a subject for him. It was only when I needed that majestic, regal-looking thakur in my film *Prem Rog* that I saw him as the ideal actor for the role and took him. Shammi was of no use to me as the 'Yahoo' star. But in *Prem Rog*, the screen lights up every time he makes an appearance.

* * *

Remembering Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor says: 'I am seven years younger than Raj-ji. I remember in his room there were a couple of cupboards, which were locked all the time. Being very sneaky, I hacked into his cupboard one day and I found scraps...cuttings from newspapers, foreign magazines, fashion magazines for ladies, and pictures of hairstyles and different dresses and designs, and story books and scenarios and scripts. He must have been sixteen or seventeen at that time. That is when he was an assistant...so this (passion for film-making) was in him from the very beginning. No one knew that he was preparing himself basically to be what he was destined to be - a film-maker...He was obsessed with films. He talked films, he smoked films, he drank films, he ate films, he slept films, he slept with them all the time - he even dreamt films...I remember, I was three or four years old, we were in Calcutta, and it being a Sunday, we were allowed to see a movie. Raj-ji had volunteered to escort me to the movie. Being a senior he had the option to select the movie. I remember he had selected Walt Disney's cartoon *Gulliver's Travels*. Mother gave us a rupee, which was a lot of money, enough to take care of the transport, tickets and the eats.

[illegible] opposite: The three brothers, Raj, Shammi and Shashi.

There was a big rush. Raj-ji asked Dwarka, our servant, who was also with us, and me to wait outside. We kept on waiting. Eventually after two hours Raj-ji came and said there were no tickets available and we returned home. When Mother wondered how it could have taken him two hours to realize there were no tickets, he confessed that the four-anna tickets had been sold out, so he bought a twelve-anna ticket and saw the movie alone! I have never forgotten this.'

* * *

With his sister Urmi
and brothers Shammi
and Shashi.

Shashi Kapoor recalls: 'Jennifer and I did not have money to fly from Singapore to Bombay to get married in the presence of my parents. I wrote to Raj-ji, and he immediately sent me two air tickets. This was how I kept my promise to my mother. Raj Kapoor was like a father to me. Fourteen years older than I am, he often called me his eldest son. My earliest recollections are of him slogging it out at Prithvi Theatres. He was in charge of the entire production. He would reach the theatre by six in the morning and remain there until late at night. The kind of energy he had made people wonder if Raj-ji had an extra generator in him. My father admired the capabilities of his eldest son, since he handled virtually everything - from production to design, from music to lighting.

'When Raj-ji started R.K. Studios in 1946 after his marriage, I was roped in as a part of his first venture, *Aag*. It was wonderful to work with him. There was one thing I did not quite fancy, though, and that was shooting at night. But oh, Raj-ji knew how to extract work from me! He would tempt me with an extra omelette or a soft drink.

'As a child, I had picked up foul language and would often use it while talking to my elders. One day Raj-ji heard me use it with my mother, and promptly slapped me. I was taken aback. My brother had always lavished affection on me. Moreover, I had never been hit by either of my parents. I shut myself up in a room and howled. Raj-ji tried to console me, but when I wouldn't stop crying, he also burst into tears!

'When Raj-ji launched *Awara*, I got another opportunity to work with him. I played the young vagabond. One day I went up to him and asked him why he wasn't paying me. He was taken aback. The very next morning, he bought me a Bell and Howell 16 mm movie camera and said, "Look, you can make use of as much raw stock as possible, but you've got to make a film." This was how he became my Guru in the film line...

My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw in my life. I have travelled all over the world and met many beautiful women but none could touch her.

With a young Shashi Kapoor (1951).

'I consider his dream sequence in *Awara* by far the best sequence he has ever produced. When I once challenged him to produce a dream sequence which could beat *Awara's*, he promptly replied, "I would give you a better sequence if I had Nargis, Shanker, Jaikishen, Shailendra and Mukesh with me." I had no answer. His magnificent personality left you speechless. This is the greatness of Raj Kapoor.

'I remember when I had to do a song sequence for the first time, I got very nervous. I went to Raj-ji and he said, "Why should you be nervous? Take it easy, do it naturally. Learn the words, move your lips, take a breath when necessary. But don't overdo it. It is better to underplay a role and look more natural. You are a Kapoor and you can do it." His advice worked like magic.

'My favourites among his own acting roles are *Aag*, *Barsaat* and the after-marriage part in *Sangam*. I think he was tops in the comedy role of *Daastan*. He was a fantastic showman. And he whole-heartedly believed in everything he did. The first thing that struck you about Raj Kapoor was his effervescence. No matter how passive you were, he elevated you mentally. There was never a dull moment with him. With people who were shy, he had the knack of putting them at ease, without seeming to do so. He was also very discreet about other people's problems, in films or outside. He never gave advice unless asked to.

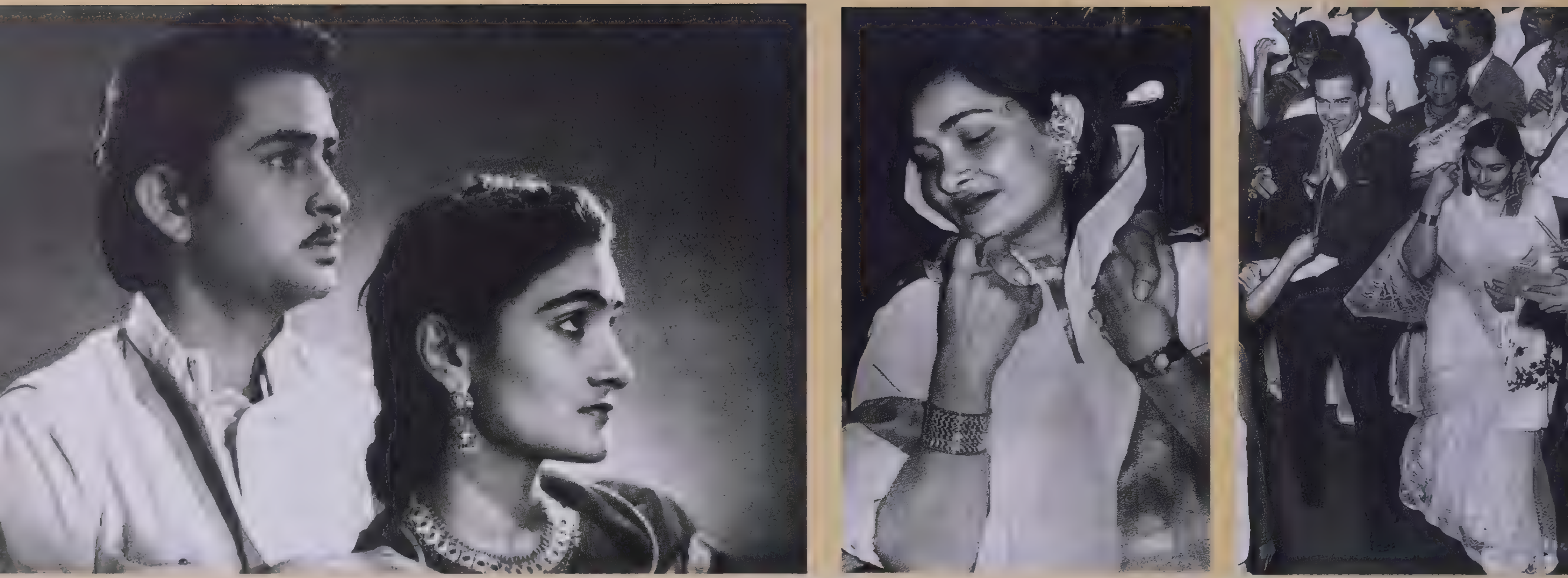
'As a film-maker, he was, of course, a superb showman. There was a certain totality of effect in his productions, the result of various elements like publicity and production, and I don't think people were ever disappointed with him."

* * *

Umi, the only sister of the Kapoors, following the family tradition, married and lived a life away from show business. She fondly recalls her brother's unique combination of playfulness and arrogance, followed by instant humility:

'Years after our parents died, we would sit below their framed photographs hung above Raj-ji's mattress - he never slept on a bed! - and talk. His face would sadden and his glorious blue eyes cloud with memories...and then he would heave a sigh, shake his head and say, "But I have yet much more to learn and more to create. I still have so much work to do." Just as I wondered at his sincere humility, he would suddenly yell, "But without me where would you all be! *Aham Brahm aasmi* (I am the Lord)!" Surely I could not let this statement pass and it became a healthy ground for much argument. Soon he would recant with, "Silence, dear beloved, I am only a Matric fail! I could not fathom the subject Latin, which I am yet to learn. I have a long way to go."

'I still remember how annoying it was when Raj-ji would yell out to me to come and give him a kiss and when I went close, out would come his tongue and slurp all over my face, and he would roar with laughter! When I would shout out to my mother and chase him off, he would run away - quite a scene of brotherly love!'



The fourth daughter of Raisaheb Kartar Nath Malhotra, who was Inspector General of Police of Rewa State, Krishna was barely sixteen when she married Raj Kapoor. Though Raj Kapoor had never seen Krishna before, she was related to him. She is the first cousin of Prithviraj.

Raj Kapoor recalled his first meeting with Krishna: 'I was planning to make *Aag* and had gone over to my co-star Prem Nath's house on the pretext of discussing his role with me, but actually to see his sister Krishna, who had been recommended to me for marriage by the elders in my family. As I entered the house, I could hear a sitar. I was automatically drawn towards the room from where the sound emanated. As I reached the door, I stood spellbound. There was this young and beautiful woman, *sangeet ki aradhana mein khoyi hui* (lost completely in her music)! For me, it was a case of love at first sight, as they say. The rest, of course, is history.'

Raj Kapoor was busy making a name for himself. And initially, Krishna could never take much interest in his film life. Soon she started to feel a gap growing between her husband and herself.

'The fault, I recollect now,' she says, 'was as much mine as his. I was immature, lacked confidence and the capacity to look at life beyond healthy children and a few luxuries. Take this from me, every dark night has a beautiful dawn. And time erases pettiness, tension...What use are passions, possessions when we die? I stopped worrying over minor things and started counting my blessings...all (that I have today) is my husband's. He earned it by the sweat of his brow. There is not a couple whose marriage does not face crises. Much depends on the woman, who should change with time as her husband changes with the years...

'Raj-ji was a simple man. He always slept on the floor. In London, at the Hilton, he was ticked off for pulling the mattress down and when he did it a second time he was fined. He paid the fine every day till he left the hotel...It was the simple folk who attracted Raj-ji. He was happiest at his farm at Loni, near Poona. He had several friends among the farmers. They conversed in Marathi, cooked and ate together. Raj-ji himself was an expert cook. Biryani and chicken were his specialties. But the great cook was a poor eater! The showman in him could not bear to see a poorly laid table, it had to overflow, but he himself merely nibbled at the food and then settled for his usual pao and eggs and a little daal. For years he ate no lunch, only dinner. At parties he merely pretended to eat. When he got home - sometimes in the early hours of the morning - he promptly had his fried eggs...

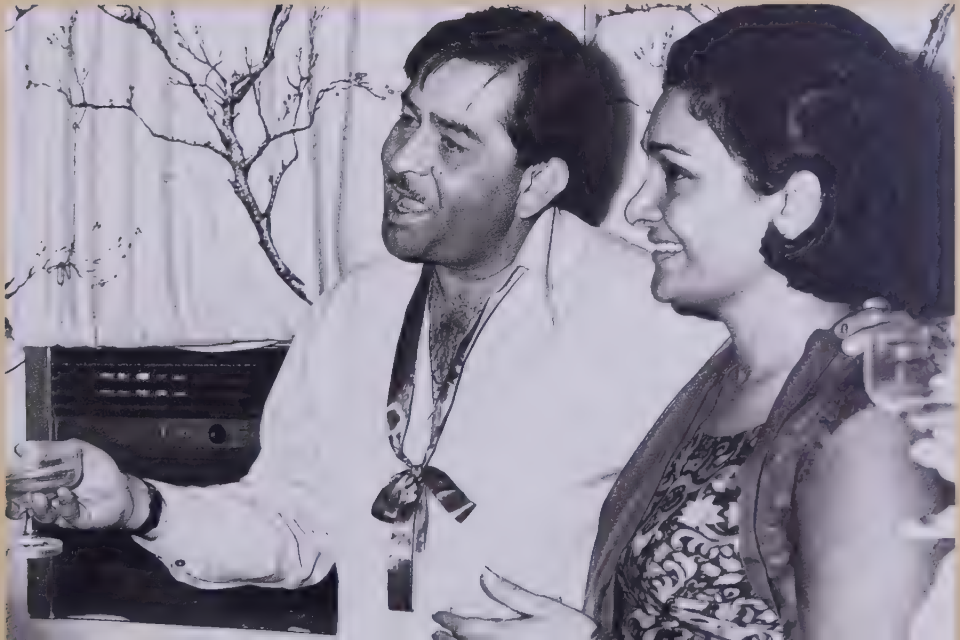
'Raj-ji was a God-fearing man; he visited practically all the shrines. Once he undertook a hazardous journey to Amarnath, the cave temple in the Himalayas. Nobody at home knew about it until he returned. Raj-ji had said that he was going for a short holiday to Kashmir. His religious faith was one of the things that he did not like to show off. He was also deeply attached to his family and children. I remember, when Ritu got married and she was departing for Delhi with her husband, everyone broke down. Only Raj-ji controlled himself admirably. He waited for her to leave and then got into his car and drove to the studio. After an hour when one of his personal attendants walked into his cottage, his master was still in tears…That was Raj Kapoor, the father. But he did not like others watching him at such moments. When Daboo (Randhir) and Chintoo (Rishi) were late returning from parties, Raj-ji would keep awake. But he never let them know that. Nor did he say anything to them the next morning. He would only tell me to talk to them…because he was not willing to sacrifice his popularity even at home!

'On Sundays, Dr Ghanti, the family physician, would come home. They were chums. They would start ringing up the bookies. When Raj-ji said "*Dus*" into the phone you would think that he was betting ten thousand but it was really just "Dus" - ten rupees, five his and five the doctor's! And when they won fifteen or twenty rupees they would go mad with excitement - the telephone would ring and Raj-ji would jump to answer it, the syringe hanging from his arm, and Dr Ghanti running after him holding on to it! This was their Sunday routine for years. They were like little boys together…In fact, Raj-ji was a great lover of comics - the funny ones, like Archie and Sad Sack. The pictorial presentation of an idea has always fascinated him.'

* * *

Do you know how Kalidasa has described the ideal wife? As one who can be her husband's friend, philosopher and guide when he is confused and needs to be shown the right direction. Who can mother him when he is hurt, and who can nurse him when he is ill. Krishna has been all these to me... Krishna is my shakti (strength), a perfect woman, who has played her role of ardhangini (the other half) to perfection. She stood by me through thick and thin. She has been my anchor. Not every man is fortunate enough to have a wife like Krishna...But then, not every woman is fortunate enough to have Raj Kapoor for a husband!

* * *



A letter written by Raj Kapoor to his wife, before leaving for the North Eastern Frontier at the time of India's war with China:

To you, my eternal love and life, to you, mother of my children, my dear wife Krishna, I am addressing a few words to express an emotional consciousness that is the truth and reality. Admitting to all my faults and shortcomings in all spheres of my life, domestic as well as worldly. Whenever I have failed to reciprocate love and affection from my very own near and dear, it is not that I am not aware of all the feelings of belonging bestowed on me, but that in my maddening self-centredness I am unable to express that as much as you all belong to me, my bond to you becomes stronger than ever...Maybe it is this...that gives me strength to act and react to all diversities of life pertaining to my very existence, namely, my work...You know very well I am an impulsive man. But one thing is clear to me, and that is we both have to create an atmosphere of communion with each other. Let me be the first to reach out and tell you no matter what I am, who I am and where I am, the imperishable truth is that I am, and I am yours.

With all my love, ever yours, Raj.

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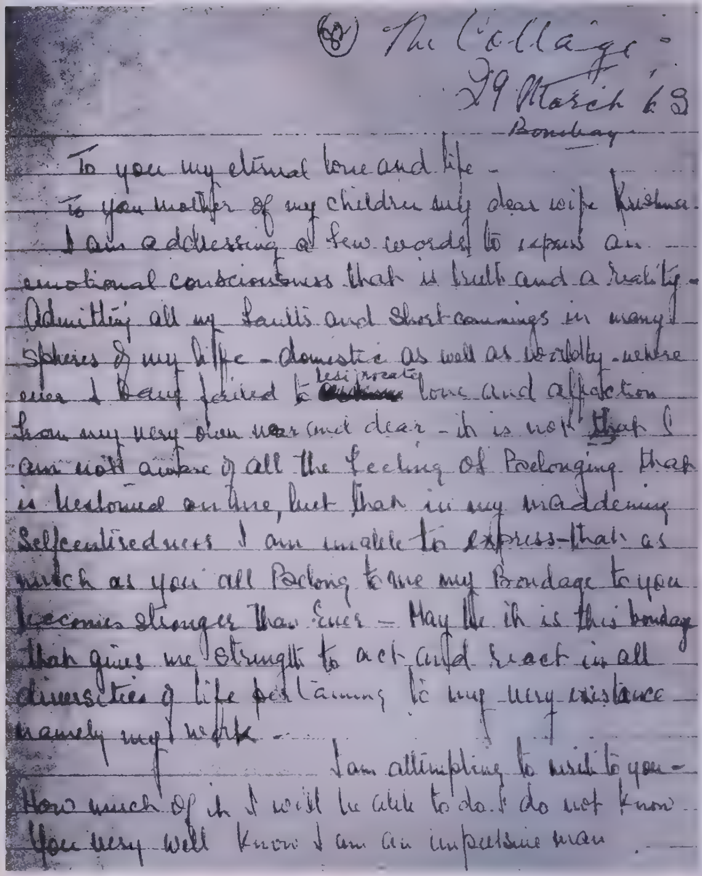

The Cottage
29 March 63
Bombay

To you my eternal love and life -
to you mother of my children my dear wife Krishna.
I am addressing a few words to express an
emotional consciousness that is truth and a reality -
Admitting all my faults and short comings in many
spheres of my life - domestic as well as worldly - where
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that gives me strength to act and react in all
diversities of life pertaining to my very existence
namely my work ...
I am attempting to write to you -
How much of it I will be able to do I do not know.
You very well know I am an impulsive man.

While entertaining the soldiers he said: 'I would like you to know that you are not alone here to defend our motherland. We, the artists...the whole nation, are behind you. The stronger and braver you are, the safer will be your brothers, sisters, children and parents...our whole country.'

When I sit back at the end of the day, I feel very sorry for all the pain that I have given you (his wife Krishna). How can I bring those days back for you? But show business is such that a woman has to be understanding because there are constant emotional involvements, because the work is such.

For Krishna, though, the mere fact that her husband appreciated her patience and love was all the compensation she wanted.

'Her love borders on devotion...determination. A lesser woman would have deserted me long ago,' Raj Kapoor often said of his wife. 'It is Krishna who has made my home. *Unhone mera ghar banaya, basaya, sajaya aur sanwara* (She made my home, inhabited it, adorned it, and cared for it).'

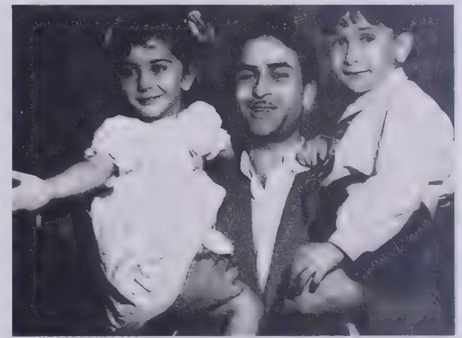
Raj Kapoor had first seen Krishna in a plain white cotton sari and that started the recurring image of the Woman in White, so important in his life. His leading ladies, Nargis, Padmini, Vyjayanthimala, willingly accepted the mould which he had sculpted, and each emerged as the Woman in White bearing the stamp of Raj Kapoor. Some say that Raj Kapoor fell in love with his heroines, others say that they fell in love with him. The truth is he loved only his wife Krishna.

Says Krishna, 'If I had to re-live my life again I would choose the same man. Ten times over - and, mind you, go through the same experience too. It is only a dark night that gives the glow to dawn.'

Raj Kapoor's eldest son Randhir was born on 15 February 1947. The same year Raj Kapoor started shooting his first film, Aag. *With the birth of his first child also arrived his first car. Daughter Ritu was born on 30 October 1948. R.K. Films acquired its first office in May 1948 and in October the same year, Raj Kapoor released his second film,* Barsaat. *It was then that he acquired his second car, that sleek convertible Oldsmobile which was a flamboyant part of Raj Kapoor in the fifties. The film* Andaz, *with Raj Kapoor as the hero, was also released in 1948 and earned him a lot of popularity.*

* * *

'His was an absolutely one-track mind,' says Rishi Kapoor about his father. 'His whole life revolved around his films. That is all he could think or talk of. With drinks, without drinks, before food, after food, morning, afternoon, noon or night, at home or in the studios, his conversation was only about films. Even if you talked about outer space or Donald Duck, he would bring the conversation back to films. *His* films, that is. He was not in the least concerned about what kind of films others were making, he was interested only in his own. He rarely stepped outside the R.K. Studios gates if he could avoid it. This was the oasis that he created for himself.'



'Dad never expected us to come out with flying colours in our studies - you see, he knew our capacity. He was happy if we passed the exams. But it was important that we developed the ability to face life independently.'

To illustrate this, Randhir recounts, 'I remember one of the few times Papa was a bit annoyed with us, Chintoo and me. We were stepping out in pants and kurta. He shouted: "Don't try to attract attention by dressing ridiculously. Let your work attract the attention of the world."'

With Rishi (top),
Randhir and Ritu

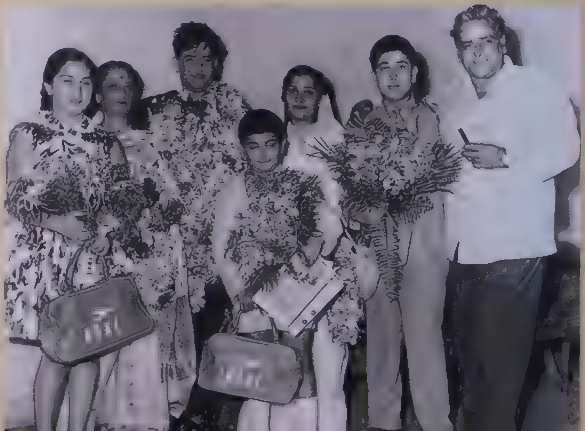
[illegible]

[illegible]

In an interview in 1980, Raj Kapoor said of himself as a family man:

To be very honest with you, I don't think that I have been a very good family man. And if...I have a family, the greatest credit and virtue is Mrs Raj Kapoor's. It is she who has tolerated me the last thirty-three years and it is she who has gone through all along with me in whatever I have been able to do in my career, and stood by me and reared this beautiful family. All credit to Krishna Kapoor. Though sometimes we don't get along very well - we have never been on beautiful terms ever for that matter - we have always been together. And the credit is hers and not mine. I can assure you that she is a very kind and tolerant woman. And she has been a great daughter-in-law to my parents, cared for and looked after them. This is the truth about the family of Raj Kapoor.

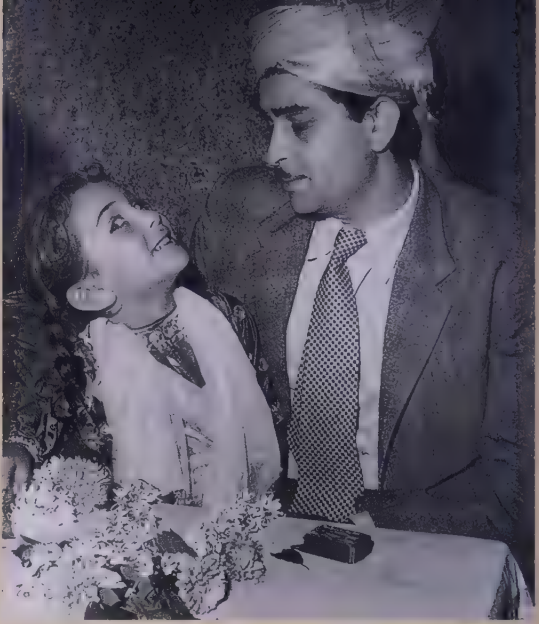
Of course I have three sons. Two of them are on their own now; they are actors and directors, they are stars. The youngest is being groomed. He is being taught the way I learnt, right from scratch...he also sweeps the floors, picks up all the lights, assists, goes to the laboratories, sits up in the editing room and edits - learning the way this craft should be learnt... I have two daughters. One is a happily married lady today with two children. My other daughter, very soon she too will be on her way to a beautiful home and husband. And I think then Krishna and myself, we will have a lot to reminisce in the last lap of life...what we lived through and how we are still together.



When my father asked me whether I would like to continue education or take up a career, I had told him that I wanted to join films. And he readily acceded to my request and took me to Chandulal Shah and Devika Rani to start my training in films as an assistant. I recalled this incident when I faced a similar situation with my own son Daboo (Randhir). So I told him to start his training as an assistant director. For, I believe and from my own experience I have learned, that it is only when you work as an assistant that you get a thorough knowledge of the intricacies of film-making.

Randhir with wife Babita and daughters Karishma (second from right) and Kareena

When Daboo was working as an assistant, he got offers to play the hero. When he sought my permission, I told him that if he wanted to start his career as an artist, he should start it with R.K. As a father and film producer in my own right, I felt that I should have the privilege to present my son to the audience. Not only that, I wanted him to make a tribute as a director as well. All that we needed was a story that would suit and enthuse him. In Virendra Sinha's *Kal Aaj aur Kal* we found the right material. Hearing the story from Virendra Sinha, I felt that here was a story which was written for us. For it had an ideal role not only for Daboo but also for myself and my father Prithviraj-ji. Just as Papa-ji (Prithviraj) had stopped playing romantic leads when I made my debut in 1947 and switched to character-acting, I also decided with the debut of my son as a hero to switch to character-acting and play a father's role in keeping with reality. In *Awara*, Papa-ji had played my father; now he had agreed to play my father again and also grandfather to my son in the film. Indeed, he was as keen as I was to help Daboo make a successful debut both as an artist and a director.



My dear daughter, keep the grace of your heritage, and do good deeds. Never embarrass your father. Always be in the heart of your husband. Your sincerity to him is your jewel. Your service to him is your duty. May you have no pain in your life. May you bloom and flourish in your home. Always remember my words and gradually forget me. I will always love you. You are my life.

These words are from the translation of a specially composed traditional farewell song by Raj Kapoor for his daughter Ritu, on the occasion of her marriage to industrialist Rajan Nanda in 1969.

Left: Ritu and Rajan Nanda with son Nikhil, daughter-in-law Shweta, daughter Nitasha and grandchildren Navya Naveli and Agastya

I recall a story which my father Prithviraj Kapoor always narrated, of an itinerant drum beater who used to balance a long pole on his shoulder and make his son climb to the top of the pole. After performing his roadside acrobatics, the son would ask the father, 'Bapu, how was my performance?' The father would always reply: *'Kasar rahi, kasar rahi* (Could be better).' One day the son asked his father: 'I perform so well, people are so happy to see me, but you are never satisfied. What is lacking in me, after all?' The father replied: 'The day you excel on the pole and achieve everything in life, and I do not say kasar rahi, you will fall down. That is why I will always say kasar rahi!'

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VENI au

With Rishi while shooting Prem Rog *(1981)*

Rishi with wife Neetu and children Riddhima and Ranbir

Today my son Rishi has got the Best Actor award. It is wonderful to see Chintoo get the National Award for his performance in my film *Mera Naam Joker*. What could make a father happier than to see in his lifetime his son's progress and success? He has the blessings and the love of the masses, but I will still say, kasar rahi, kasar rahi.

[illegible]

With daughter Rima Raj Kapoor's relationship was always very special. So was their way of resolving their differences. If there was a quarrel, both of them would sulk; then, to make peace, he would scribble her a little note like this one:

I know if I am no more you will not miss me, because while I am alive you could not care less. It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. There is a lot of love to give and receive. Put it to a better use for those who deserve it.

Marriage is important, but why is it important? A woman is complete only when she procreates. In a woman's life, the greatest achievement is when she gives birth to a child and because of the social norms and rules, one needs to be married to have a child. A woman is always looked up to. A woman doesn't have to fight and say she is above the man. If I live to see you married, I will give you a crystal wedding.

As fate would have it, Rima married Manoj Jain seven months after the death of her father.

Drawing a line on a piece of paper, Raj Kapoor told his youngest son, Rajiv: 'I am on one side of the line and you are on the other side. Whatever discussions you want to hold with me, whatever advice you want from this side of the line, you will get, but always remember that the other side is totally yours. You have to live your life, not me or anyone else. So, whatever you do, do it with a lot of thought.'

With Rajiv at the shooting of Ram Teri Ganga Maili *(1985).*

I have never launched a film primarily to launch any son of mine as an actor. Look back carefully, and you will see that what I am saying is right. I am a film-maker first and foremost. Raj Kapoor the father, the brother, the husband, the lover, all of them are secondary to Raj Kapoor the film-maker. I would much rather be a bad father, but I will never compromise my integrity as a film-maker or do anything which belittles that credit title of mine - 'Directed and edited by Raj Kapoor'. To me the motivating force behind the making of a film is its theme. It must fascinate me. It must strike the deepest chords within me. Once I have decided which subject I will make, then I do its casting accordingly. My script decides my cast; my cast does not decide my script.

What pleases me is that all of us Kapoors are involved with films in one way or another. I remember, a few years ago, when my grandson was born, I received a telegram saying: 'Congratulations to the whole industry on the arrival of a new actor in its fold!' Today when my contemporaries are posing with young actresses on their laps, I am doing so with my granddaughters.

* * *

Randhir's daughters Karishma and Kareena are the fourth generation of Kapoors in the Indian film industry.

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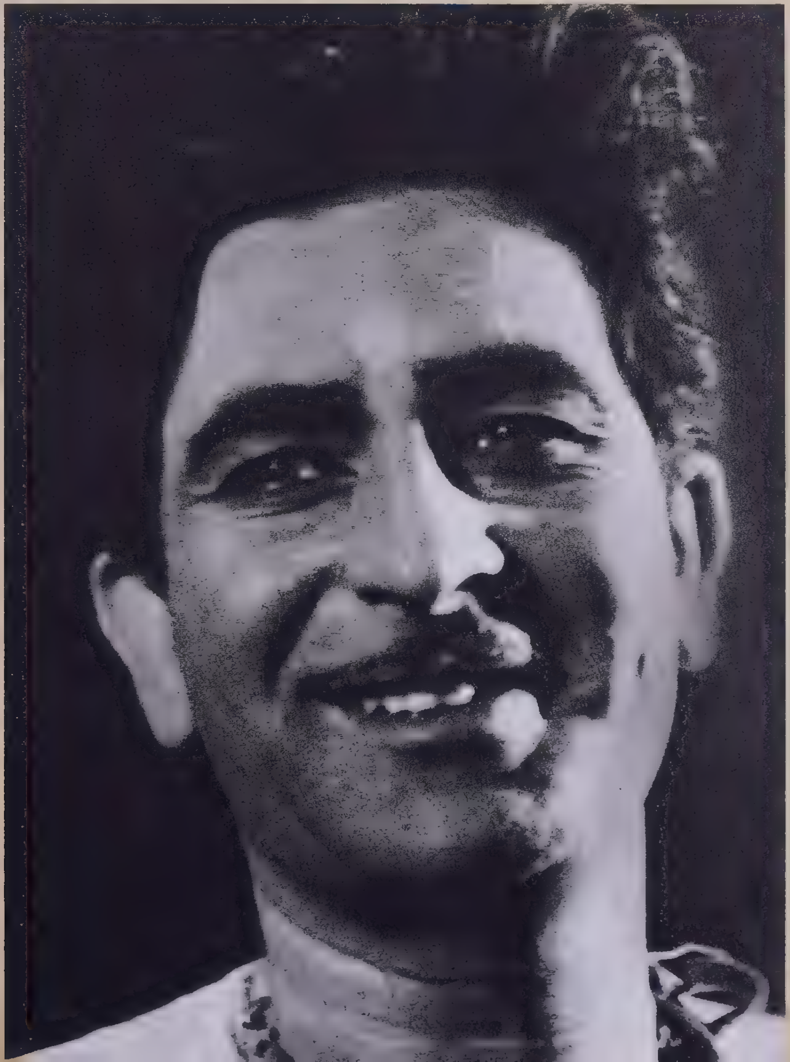
When I was working with my father in Prithvi Theatre, where I did all kinds of work, right from the lighting of the sets to art direction, he asked me to play a small role on stage as Ramu, the servant, in *Deewar*. I was young and I could not refuse my father. 'Right, sir, I will!' On the opening of that play, I was discovered as an actor after ten years in the film industry.

BEGINNINGS



My becoming an actor was an accident. I have always wanted to be a film-maker. I do not have many academic qualifications to my credit, except for those ten years of toil as an assistant, literally sweeping floors on film sets, shifting furniture and props. I have worked in each and every department of the film industry, right from the laboratory to the cinema. I should credit this to my father.

When I wanted to leave school, my father asked me: 'Why do you want to leave?' I said: 'Sir, if I graduate, what happens? If you want to become a lawyer, you go to a law college; if you want to become a doctor, you to go a medical college; and if you want to be a film-maker, where do you go?' My father did not have an answer. There were no film institutes in India. The only institutions were the studios. I said, 'I don't want to be a lawyer, I don't want to be a doctor. The profession I like is what you are doing, and the only way to learn is to get myself enrolled into some studio.' That is how I began my career, as the sixth or seventh assistant, trolley-puller, clapper-boy, somewhere in the laboratory picking up odd shots and in the editing department looking at the use of the gamma plus (the solution used for editing) - that gave me a lot of basic training about the fundamentals of cinema.

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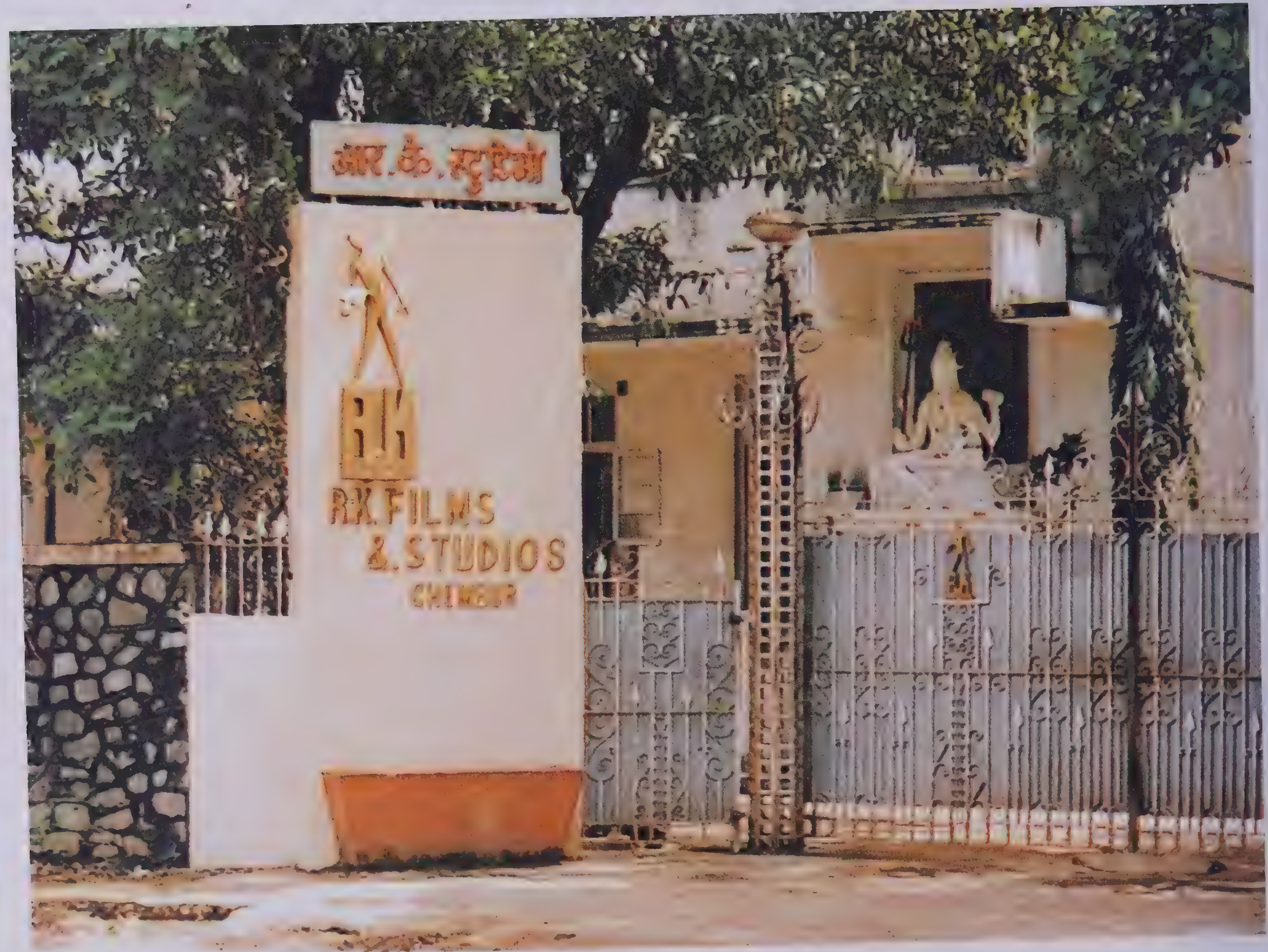
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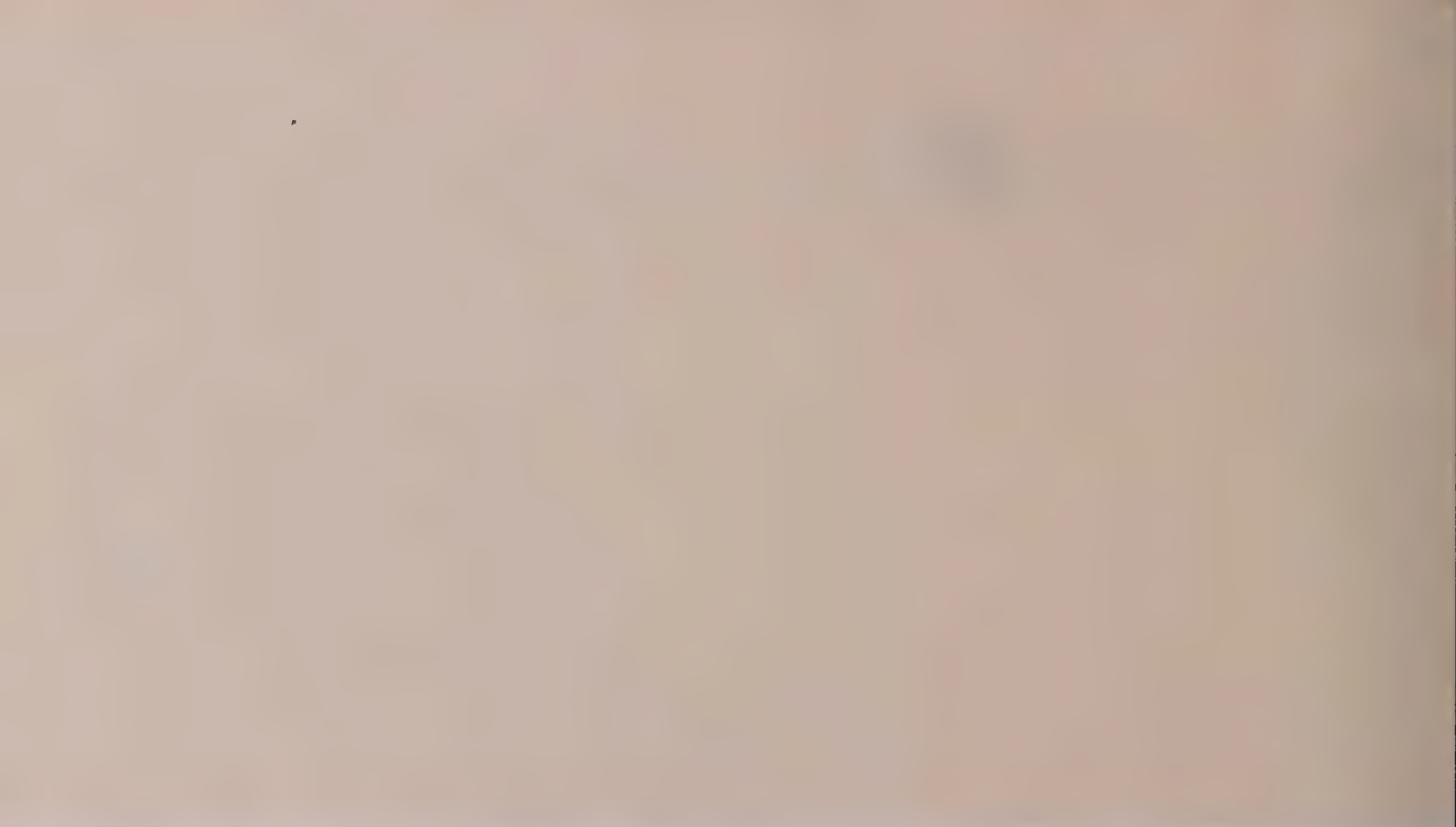
RK
R.K.FILMS
& STUDIOS
CHEMBUR

In 1944, Mr Kidar Sharma gave me my first lead as an actor in his film *Neel Kamal*. I had been his junior-most assistant for three years. One of my tasks was to give the clap before every shot. I had a good vibe with the cameraman, and he had agreed to take a close-up of me before every shot and give me the photographs. I used to comb my hair immaculately and then bend my face a little forward over the clapper-board to get a nice close-up. No one had noticed this till, one day, I clapped hard and moved away as usual but this time the actor's beard got caught between the clapper-board and the stick. The entire unit burst out laughing and a furious Sharma-ji gave me a stinging slap on the face. I was stunned...but I never said a word; I knew the mistake was mine. I walked quietly off the set. As a result of this episode, I got my first lead role. Sharma-ji later said, 'I was struck by the depth and pain in those intense eyes.'

I started working. But even though I became a star, I had something else on my mind. The money that I got from acting, I saved, and that is how I became a producer, director and an actor, all in one, at the start my career. My own R.K. Films was thus born in the year 1947.



Nargis as a person was, I think, a very noble lady, who could sense the pain, the sorrow, the anxiety of anybody who came to talk to her...She could generate in a person a certain spiritual power, which would vitalize that person to work and to venture into anything.

Nargis and Raj Kapoor in Barsaat *(1949)*

HEROINES

I was married and a father when I made *Aag*. I was about twenty-two. Nargis, sixteen.

Of his first meeting with Nargis, at her Marine Drive flat, Raj Kapoor would recall:

After ringing the doorbell, I stood there with bated breath. The door opened and what did I see? An angel standing before me. *Woh kisi pari se kam nahin thi!* (She was no less than an angel.) She had short hair. *Baalon ki ek latt uski dahini aankh par aayi, aur lagta tha jaise who mujhe sirf ek aankh se dekh rahi thi!* (A strand of hair fell over her left eye, and it seemed as though she was looking at me with only one eye.) That is how I met her and we worked in that film (*Aag*), and what a great actress she was!

Raj Kapoor composed a scene in his film Bobby which was inspired from real life—the first time he met Nargis:

Let me tell you the story from the beginning. Shiraz Ali Hakim had built this studio called Famous at Maha Laxmi. It was a new studio and not many producers had filmed there. I decided to shoot *Aag* there. But before that I wanted to check on the quality of the acoustics, because in those days we had to record the sound along with the visual; there was no such thing as dubbing.

When I went to Famous, I discovered that Jaddan Bai was making a film titled *Romeo–Julie*t. She had just packed up and gone home. I decided to visit her. I knocked on the door. What happened then was what you saw in *Bobby*, when Dimple opens the door to Chintoo (Rishi Kapoor). Jaddan Bai's daughter was making *bhajias* inside...she heard the doorbell and came running. As she was talking to me she nervously placed one hand on her forehead and all the *aata* stuck to her *maatha*...and that is exactly how I made Dimple look in *Bobby*.

She asked me who I was and I said I was Prithviraj Kapoor's son, because at the time those were the only credentials I had! She said she knew me very well because she had seen me on stage in *Deewar*. I enquired whether Bibi-ji - that was how Jaddan Bai was known - was home. She said, 'No...nobody is here...I'm alone in the house...' And she asked me to sit down, but I said, 'No, no...I must go.' And I left the house, but I didn't leave her behind. Her memory stayed with me. I drove straight to Inder Raj Anand and said, 'I must have this girl in my film... you must write her into the screenplay!' I was planning *Aag* at that time. That was how I met Nargis and cast her in *Aag* - with that tremendous build-up in *Aag*, my audience was waiting to catch a glimpse of her...but they could see her only in the ninth reel!

Nargis was my inspiration, *meri sphoorti* (my energy). Yes, my wife has been shakti, and all my heroines have been my sphoorti. My wife is not to be my actress, and my actress is not to be my wife.

Women have always meant a lot in my life, but Nargis meant more than anybody else. I used to always tell her, 'Krishna is my wife, she is the mother of my children; I want you to be the mother of my films.' And that's precisely what she was.

I have very beautiful memories of Nargis and our work. There was a special delight in her looks, her gait, her speech. You couldn't cast her in just any role, though she had great adaptability. That calibre, that kind of person, you do not find in films any more.

Nargis understood me and I understood her. You know, I cannot exactly explain my feelings towards her. No, it is not love, though I do like her very much. I think it is the feeling that one good artiste has towards another.

Left: With Nargis in Shree 420

Opposite: With Nargis in Awara

Given Raj Kapoor's rather chauvinistic attitude towards Nargis and the inherent futility of their relationship, it was inevitable that it should have no future. One day, almost as suddenly as she had entered his life, Nargis opted for marriage with the actor, producer and director Sunil Dutt, and quit films.

The famous still from Jagte Raho *(above left)) was the last frame born of the celebrated association between Nargis and R.K. Films. Nargis was signed for* Mother India *and switched over to the Mehboob camp. And that was the end of a beautiful relationship - a relationship that bore all the strains of public and private life while it lasted, and which enhanced the creativity of a man, possessed as he was by his lady-love, who gave Indian cinema some its most memorable moments.*

'It is quite likely,' Raj Kapoor later observed, 'that when Nargis signed up for that film she had, within herself, already mentally resolved the most important dilemma of her life, whether to continue what had become a futureless association with Raj Kapoor, or to make a life of her own, away from R.K.'

[illegible], Neetu, Sanjay Dutt, Nargis, Rishi, Sunil Dutt and Krishna

I did not discover Baby Naaz, she was brought to me by Prakash Aurora. She immediately caught my eye - she was very, very smart...a little girl of seven, very precocious...the kind I needed for *Boot Polish*. She gave a brilliant performance.

* * *

I had met Kamini Kaushal before Nargis, before *Aag*, when I was working in a film called *Jail Yatra*. She put in a very sensitive performance in *Aag*. She was like that, very sensitive, very delicate, very beautiful, very young, very feminine...a good actress...very emotional. What I really admired in Kamini was her honesty, which came through in her performance. When she spoke, you felt, yes...she means it.

* * *

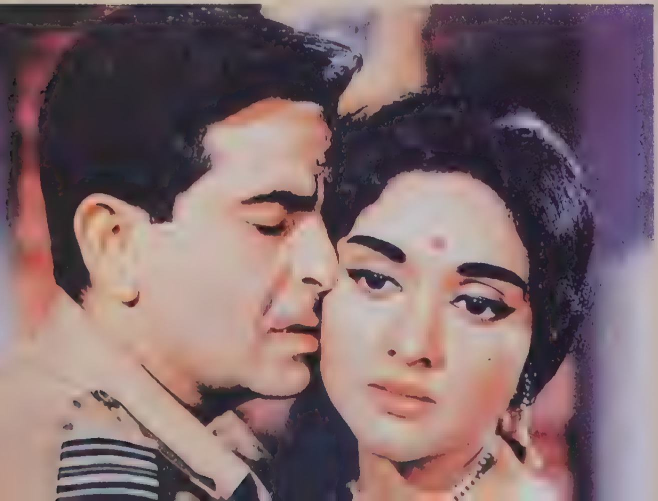
Actually, I didn't discover Nimmi. I borrowed her from Mehboob Khan. Nimmi was the daughter of the famous singer Wahidan, who at that time was working for Mehboob Khan. Nimmi and her mother used to visit the sets of *Andaz* at Mehboob Studios, and that was where I first met her. I asked Mehmood Sahib if I could cast her in my film *Barsaat* and he said yes. Let me tell you, when I took her in my film, she knew nothing about acting. I had to teach her everything. On screen she looked so fresh, so young...like a rosebud, the way I had visualized the character she played.

Clockwise from top left
Baby Naaz, Kamini Kaushal
and Nimmi.

'I have a beautiful memory of Sangam,' remembers Vyjayanthimala. 'It was a very interesting role for me. I was working in another Hindi movie with Raj-ji, which was being shot in Madras, called *Nazrana*. Once, during the shots, Raj-ji looked at me and said, "You are my ideal Radha, for my next film, *Sangam*... will you be Radha?"

'In the beginning, I was not used to Raj-ji's way of working. He was very demanding at times...a hard taskmaster with a deep passion. But it didn't take me long to understand how he wanted his Radha to be - vivacious, lively, bubbly, highly sophisticated, charming, intelligent. For the first time in a Hindi film Europe was exposed beautifully. He had an eye for beauty, he knew the pulse of the audience, and he knew what exactly to give them...in an artistic format. He took a lot of pains and discussed a lot with his cinematographer.

'The other thing was his remarkable sense of music. His sense of rhythm, his sense of timing, was amazing. I have watched him sit for hours with his music directors wanting a particular melody till he was satisfied. I have worked with all the great film-makers, everybody had their own style...for this type of a role I think I couldn't have done better...(Raj Kapoor) was one of the greatest film-makers.'



Padmini's was one of the most important roles in the film *Mera Naam Joker*. She was the waif whom the Joker picks up from the streets, grooms and finally makes into a star. Once she reaches the top, she abandons the Joker and he is left hopeless and alone. The Meena of *Mera Naam Joker* had to go from a tomboyish waif to a sex goddess. I chose

Padmini for this role because of her down-to-earth rustic appeal and very raw sexuality. She was the only girl I could choose at that particular point in time to play a sex goddess with any credibility.

The actress goes through the director while portraying a character, acts it as if she is living it, and when she sees herself (on screen), she falls in love. 'I have done that? Oh, you are wonderful!' and thereby she falls in love with the director, the maker of the image she loves. But actually she is in love with herself. That is why I think that I have had some beautiful relationships with my actresses, all of them, because they feel that they belong, and this belonging is a very great thing in our profession. Naturally, there is a man involved and a woman involved, but in fact there is nobody beyond oneself that you are in love with.

* * *

Mary is the first girl the hero of *Mera Naam Joker* falls in love with, when he is just an adolescent. Mary is his schoolteacher and the embodiment of goodness and purity. She is warm, human, gentle and compassionate. Simi had the right qualities for the role...and she played it to perfection.

I had a clear picture of the trapeze artiste in my mind when I flew to Russia. I interviewed hundreds of girls that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Moscow showed me, but none seemed right. Then suddenly one night, while attending a ballet, I noticed a young girl. She was in the back row...she was not even the leading ballerina! But the moment I saw her, I knew she was my Marina, the heroine of *Mera Naam Joker*. Immediately I communicated my decision to the people concerned...and one day Ryabinkyna flew down to Bombay, and to R.K. Studios to enact the role. I hired a Hindi tutor for her, since she had to speak a few lines of Hindi in the film...What came through on screen was the beauty and the grace inherent in the ballerina, and, of course, that inexplicable something called 'star quality'.

Raj Kapoor wanted a new girl for Bobby. *It was a family friend, Munni Dhawan, who suggested that he should consider Dimple Kapadia. Raj Kapoor saw her and liked her instantly.*

Recalls Dimple: 'I was only thirteen years old when Raj saab decided to cast me. My dad became apprehensive. He thought the Kapadia clan might create a rumpus about my joining films. We had already turned down Hrishikesh Mukherji's offer to play the lead in his film *Guddi*. Raj saab said to my father, 'Let me give her a screen test, and then you decide.' I was very keen to do the film, so finally Dad gave in. Daboo was making *Kal Aaj aur Kal* at the time, and I was screen tested on Daboo's sets. When I walked onto the set with make-up on, I caused quite a stir, Raj saab told me later. He said that from the first shot I was "spontaneous and unselfconscious". After the test Raj saab asked the sound recordist, Allauddin Khan, "*Kaisi Lagi?* (What do you think?)" He said, "*Bismillah Karo!* (Let's start!)" Then came the crucial moment, when he asked the cameraman, Radhu Karmakar, to give his evaluation. "Star material," Radhu saab said, and that was it...

'Raj Kapoor is like a father to me. Subconsciously I have retained everything he taught me. If I am able to move about in the Industry now with a certain degree of self-assurance, it is thanks to him. He taught me all the subtle nuances of

acting. He would scold me, cajole me, and pamper me till I gave the right shot. Once when tears rolled down my cheeks without glycerine, he praised me and said, "Here's my natural born actress." It was small things like this that made you try harder. You wanted to give your best. I always felt very inadequate because I was always trying to measure up to his standards. He used to enact every little gesture for us. I have never consciously compared myself to other actresses and yet I feel so unsure of myself so often. It is, I realize now, because of the high standards he had set for me - I am always trying to live up to his expectations.'

I am temperamentally unsuited to the making of pictures piecemeal. I must have my colleagues about me all the time, trying out the music, arguing over the story and situations, creating the entire fabric of the picture with vision and imagination. All the time their minds must be in tune with mine.

Zeenat Aman on Raj Kapoor:

'Whenever Raj Kapoor started a new film, there was a great wave of anticipation regarding his heroine. It was the same with *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*. Raj-ji was still scouting around for a girl when I went across to his cottage...dressed exactly as he had visualized his heroine. When I knocked on the door and he asked who it was, I replied, "Your future heroine." I think he was very touched by my dedication and determination to act in his film. He made me do a screen test, which was also an experience by itself. I got the role. I put myself totally in his charge. I was like clay in the hands of a potter.

'It took us two years to shoot the

film. Much of it was picturized at his farm in Pune. We were like one large family there. All of us stayed in his house and we'd dine together, discuss the day's work, see his old films at night...Every morning there'd be fresh flowers for me. All over the farm, he had put up huge blow-ups of mine - I felt as if I was the only heroine in the world. But behind the camera he was a hard taskmaster. He would not compromise on anything. Whether I had to get drenched in the rain or walk on stones or dance through bramble and bushes, I had to do it. Of course, after the shot, the warm shawl and the spoon of brandy would be ready. And he saw to it that before I walked barefoot through the bushes the whole path was cleaned of thorns! That was Raj-ji's special touch. He made his leading ladies feel very fragile and important.'

Padmini Kolhapure, on Raj Kapoor's role in shaping her career:

'Whatever I am today is solely because of Raj-ji. When I did *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* I started becoming aware as an actress - I was taught to act, taught in the sense that Raj uncle showed me what to do, how to go about things on the set, what facing the camera meant.

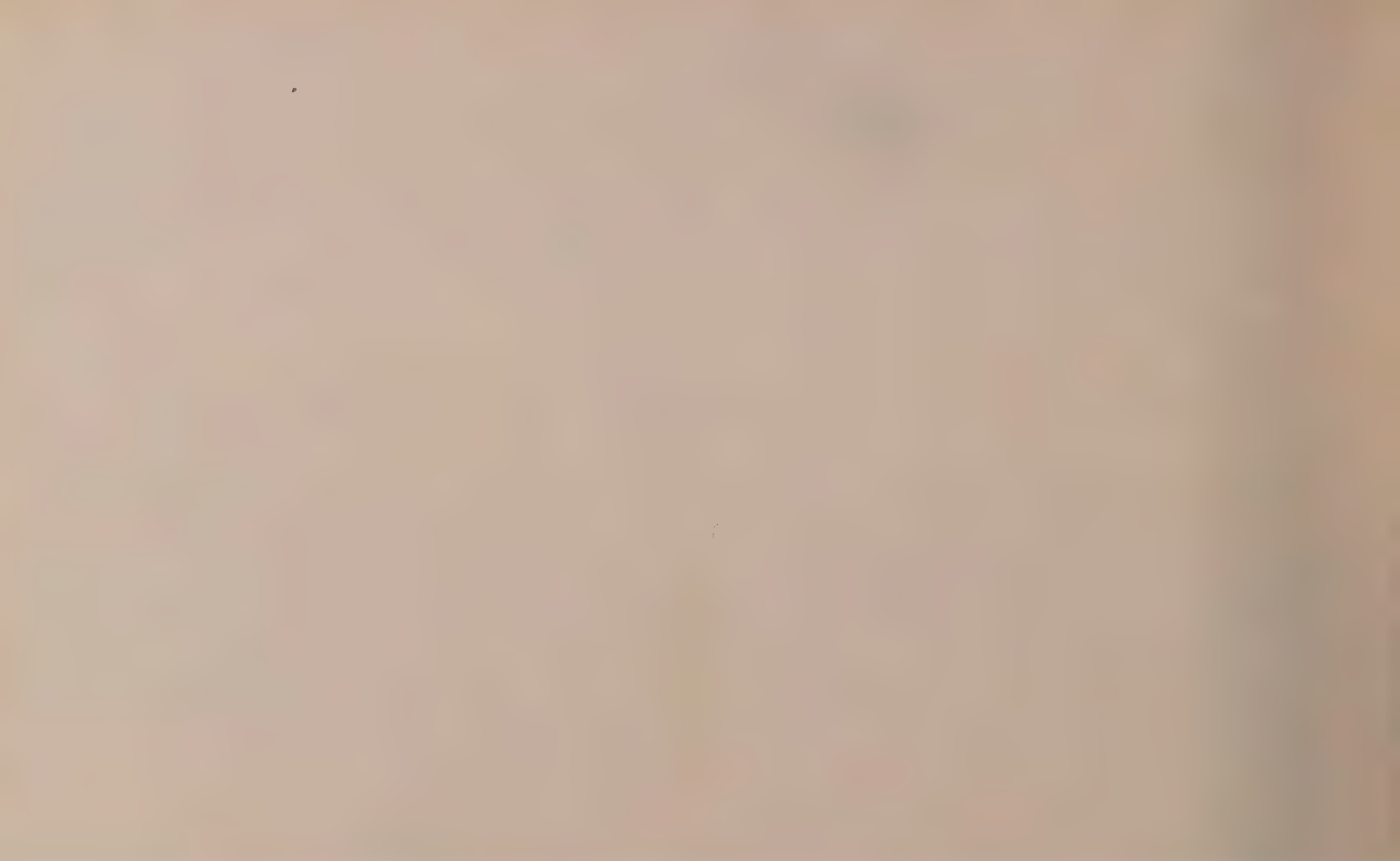
'I was fifteen when I signed *Prem Rog*. Being a leading lady under the R.K. banner was a dream come to true for any actress. Raj uncle called me and he said, "You have to play Manorama but I have to get you screen tested, because in *Prem Rog* you have to play a young widow and you should look a widow and not a child." He screen tested me and I got the role. I couldn't believe it. And my God, what an experience that was in acting! By the time I was doing *Prem Rog* I had a special rapport with him. He would just sit there on his chair and tell me, "This is what I want," and somehow I knew exactly what he wanted, and he was happy with what I gave.

'I suppose in many ways I grew up with him and learned so much...His intensity, emotions and his passion for film-making were fascinating. He was so aware of himself as a director, and he made no bones about it. When he got something he wanted, he would say, "This is brilliant." But a lot of times I would be doing a particular scene and he would not cut the shot where it was meant to be cut; if the flow was good, he would just let the camera go on. Sometimes I would fumble, and forget my dialogues, and then he would get angry and give me a firing. That would upset me...At the end of the day I would go and ask him about that and say I didn't like the way he had spoken to me, but he would have forgotten all about it!'

For the role of the virginal Ganga in Ram Teri Ganga Maili, *Raj Kapoor had met several girls, but none seemed to fit the bill, till a girl from Meerut came along...*

Recalls Mandakini's father, C. Joseph: 'Early in 1982 we read in a film magazine that Raj Kapoor was looking for a new girl to play the lead in *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*. My daughter Yasmin was keen on a film career, so we thought, why not give it a try? My daughter and I came to Bombay from Meerut, and went straight to meet Raj Kapoor at R.K. Studios. It was a nice meeting and the Great Man said he would like to take a screen test.

'After Raj saab took the test, we went back to Meerut. A fortnight later, an exhibitor in Meerut came rushing to our house - we had no phone - to tell us that he'd received a phone call from Raj saab's Delhi distributor, conveying a message from Raj saab that we should go to Bombay immediately. We were terribly excited and rushed to Bombay. Raj saab showed us the result of our test and said he'd like to take another screen test. By then we were certain that Raj saab had made up his mind in Yasmin's favour. He actually had...and then the massive publicity campaign followed...'



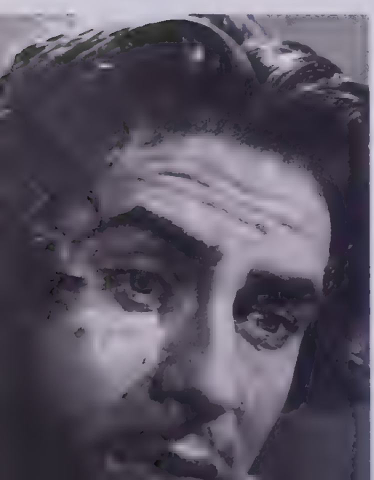
Despite all problems, despite all obstacles, you go ahead towards the horizon which you have seen. It is there in your eyes, and if I can help (you) through my films, I think I have done something for humanity.

FILMS

I will never forget *Aag*, because it is a story of youth consumed by the desire for a brighter, more intense life. It is about all those who flitted like shadows through my own life, giving something, taking something...There was never enough money, it was an uphill struggle from the *mahurat* (inaugural shot) of the picture to the day of its release. I mortgaged my car. I even borrowed money from my old servant Dwarka to buy tea and food for my unit...I remember my mother telling my father, using a sarcastic Punjabi phrase, that you can't fry pakoras in spit, meaning that I would never be able to make the film without any resources. My father just turned around to her and said, 'You wait and watch. The boy will make the film. He has the confidence and the conviction.' I couldn't forget those words, and still haven't, because that's really all you need in this business.

While making *Aag* there were even times when I carried tins of my film from one distributor's office to another's, hoping to get buyers for it and finding none - till one day when I arranged for a small group of distributors to see the rushes of the half-completed film. The verdict was: 'This film will not run in any territory.' One distributor had even gone to sleep, he was so bored! But this man never liked seeing rushes anyway. He said to me: 'I don't back a picture, I back a man. Whether this film runs or not, I must have it at all cost.' He shook the hand of an anxious and ambitious film-maker, vigorously pressing a single silver one-rupee coin into his palm, and the deal was struck. From that day onwards, every picture I have made has gone as a matter of course to this distributor of mine who, long before anyone else, had the courage and the vision to back an unknown youngster embarking on the perilous seas of a film career.

What convinces me about a script is that there is enough human value in the story. *Aag* had just such a script. It drew upon the experiences of my father (*Prithviraj Kapoor's father wanted him to study law but Prithviraj wanted to become an actor*). It stirred up a lot of people. It ran for sixteen weeks in those days. It was a totally different film, which came with a bang.



The love scenes (in *Aag*) had a direct appeal, and a vivid, new tradition was born. Looking back it is easy to understand why. There was truth in them, intense conviction...They blazed a new trail in expression. They portrayed the pent up longings and desires of that mute stage of life—youth...

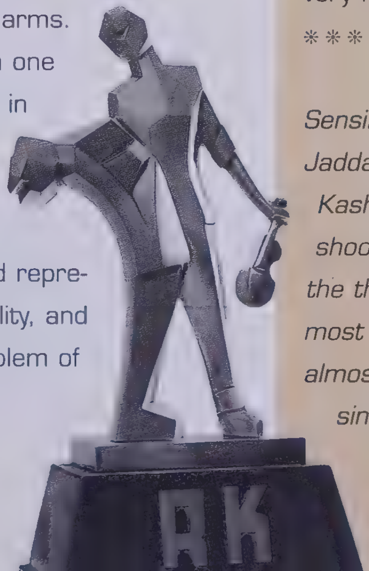
In both *Aag* and *Andaz* Nargis was projected as a very modern girl in an era when heroines were very

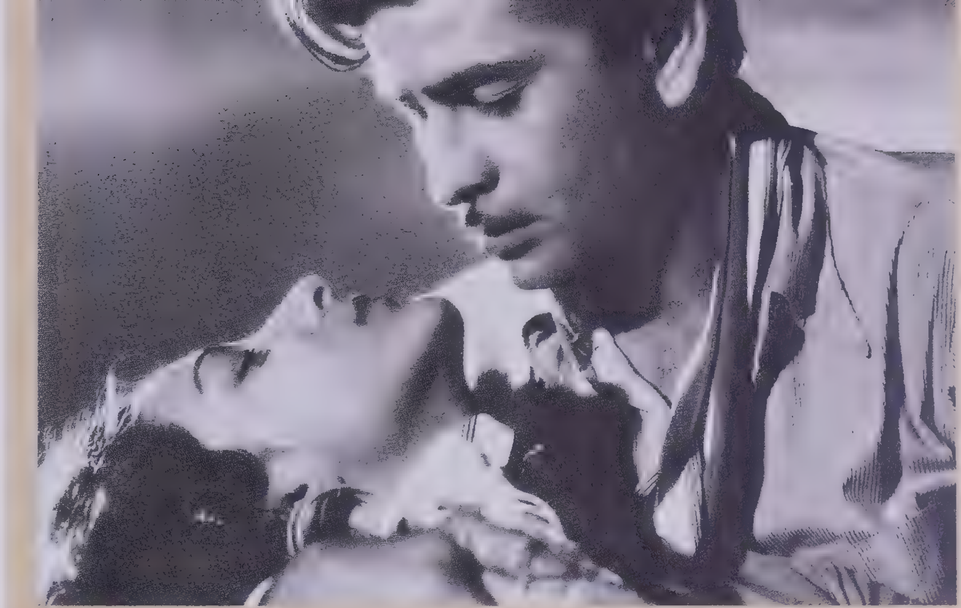
[illegible]

Indian. It was not meant to be revolutionary; it was a natural casting because Nargis was like that. She was one of the few heroines who had been educated in a convent. She was a college-going girl...if films hadn't grabbed her, she would have been in college. Frankly, the whole thing (*Aag* and *Andaz*) happened at a time when the camera could catch her exactly as she was. You see, Nargis, somehow or the other, embodied her generation.

* * *

There is a story behind the origin of the R.K. emblem. It started with a still from *Barsaat*. That still was beautiful: a man is playing the violin and a woman falls into his arms. He holds the violin in one arm and the woman in the other, both so gracefully, that I thought here is something that could represent creation in totality, and so I made it the emblem of R.K. Films.





Barsaat was my first major box-office success. A lot of people who contributed to it were all very new. I was just one film old. It was Shanker-Jaikishen's first musical score, Shailendra and Hasrat Jaipuri's first film as lyricists, Ramanand Sagar's first film for me, and Nimmi was also a newcomer. *Barsaat* was the very first of my films for which Lata (Mangeshkar) sang.

* * *

Sensing the fascination that Raj Kapoor and Nargis had for each other, Jaddan Bai, Nargis' mother, refused to permit her daughter to go to Kashmir to shoot Barsaat. *Eventually Raj Kapoor had to compromise and shoot all the important scenes in Mahabaleshwar...In* Barsaat, *as in* Aag, *the theme was youth and love. Its famous love scene is regarded as the most romantic in modern Indian cinema. The intensity of passion borders almost on the violent, but it does not offend, nor is it jarring, because it is sincere in its vision of love as something sacred.*

Raj Kapoor made his most fateful decision - the one which outlined the design that destiny had woven for him - when he bought the script of Awara from K.A. Abbas, who had initially offered it to the legendary film-maker Mehboob Khan. Mehboob Khan had heard the script but kept his decision in abeyance. When the writers, Abbas and V.P. Sathe, read the script out to Raj Kapoor, he listened quietly and at the end of the narration exclaimed, 'Done, this script is mine!'

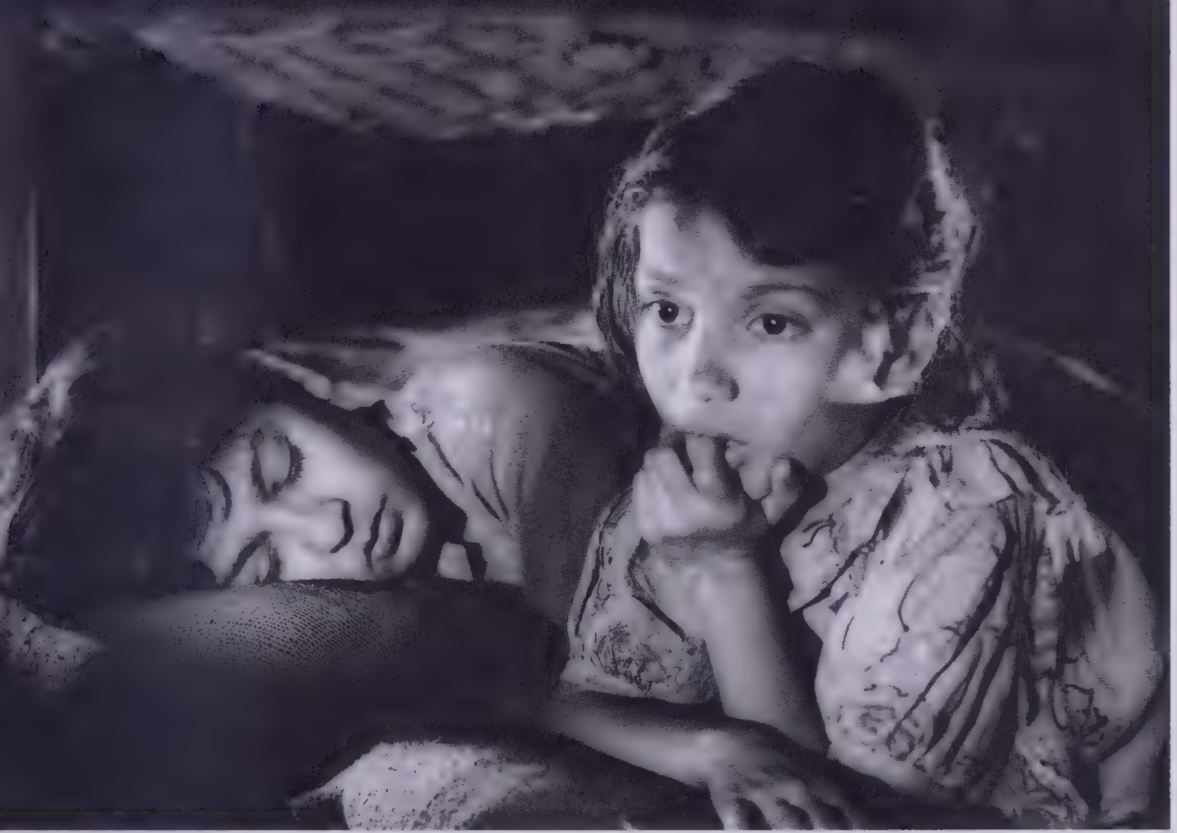
The crux of the project, of course, was its casting. It was the classic confrontation of father and son, and the only casting that made sense, in terms of showmanship, was Prithviraj and Raj Kapoor. It was difficult to get the thespian of the Indian film industry, Prithviraj Kapoor, to agree. He resisted accepting the role at first, saying, 'Prithviraj does not play the role of the hero's father.' Abbas promptly retorted, 'No, you are not playing the hero's father. It is Raj Kapoor who is playing the hero's son!' The filming of Awara was thus started.

Awara came at a time when films were of a totally different nature. We still had remnants of British imperial dominance and we wanted a new social order. I tried to create a balance between entertainment and what I had to say to the people. *Awara* had everything. It had the theme of class distinction. It had the greatest juvenile romantic story wrapped in the poverty that the post-Independence era had inherited. It bloomed like a lotus in the mud and it went to people as something they had never seen before. Could this ever happen to a young man in such circumstances? With a song on his lips and a flower he went through all the ordeals that socio-economic disruptions could bring about. The change that the people wanted, they saw in the spirit of the young man who was the vagabond, the '*awara*'.

Awara celebrates the innocence of the Republic, newly born, learning to cope with the difficult world.

I will not forget my failures. I did not have to wait until the premiere of *Aah*, at its third screening, to know its fate. I was in the darkened auditorium at the very first show at the Opera House in Bombay, listening to what the atmosphere had to tell me. It told me again and again, 'Your picture is a flop'. Years of experience in film-making enable you to understand that living, palpitating atmosphere of the auditorium during the first show. It conveys the reaction of the audience.

Aah flopped. After that came *Boot Polish*, and I was holding my breath again. It ran. Then *Jagte Raho* came to the screen and that living, palpitating thing in the darkened auditorium began to nag me again. What it told me this time I just could not accept. Therefore the Grand Prix which *Jagte Raho* won at the Karlovy Vary film festival is doubly unforgettable.



The young of this country have everything in them. They are honest, educated, they can be beautiful, wonderful citizens of the country if given the opportunities. But certain influences have always bogged them down, and they have been trapped in a situation where they are helpless. Being beaten down by social influences, by a shortage of economic resources, they still carry a flower in their hand and move towards a different horizon. A day will come when the young will reach their goal.

* * *

Boot Polish, *as we know it, is a wonderful illustration of Raj Kapoor's uncanny music sense. It is a testimony to his belief that music often makes all the difference when it comes to the box-office. The seventy-minute film had been directed by Raj Kapoor's assistant, Prakash Aurora, and he had no songs in it. Raj Kapoor saw the film and wondered: how will it run? He then decided to make his own contribution to the movie and incorporated songs into the story, including such everlasting popular numbers like* 'Nanhe munne bachche teri mutthi main kya hai?', *and thus ensured that Prakash Aurora's film became a success.*

* * *

Everybody was enthused by the post-Independence spirit which our political leaders had generated, to create the India of their dreams. They had fought for freedom but then they had to 'achieve' it. And that is how I gradually drifted towards socially committed cinema and came out with films like *Awara, Boot Polish, Shree 420 and Jagte Raho.*

We wanted a reformed social order, a certain kind of discipline, education to eradicate poverty, and so on. I saw the environment and the social effect it had on people and tried to...present it with romanticism and a certain sensitivity of belonging, of humanism...and in totality it worked out as love.

It was his deep insight and artistic acumen that brought Raj Kapoor to the theme of Jagte Raho. *Raj Kapoor was the first Indian producer to win the coveted Grand Prix award at an international festival. The event took place at Karlovy Vary where the world critics gave Raj Kapoor a standing ovation.*

The failure of Jagte Raho *in 1956 was a big setback for Raj Kapoor. 'One flop is capable of undoing the good done by two hits,' he had said. When he was told some years later that the film was a success in the re-run, Raj Kapoor asked, 'And who saw it?' He sighed, 'A film-maker should not have to wait ten to twelve years to see profits and the acceptability of his creation.'*

Jagte Raho *marked the end of Nargis' association with Raj Kapoor. His last meeting with her was in Berlin, when he was on his way to Karlovy Vary and she was on her way back home.*

It was the post-Independence era. There were a lot of factors that influenced young minds, and they influenced me. Pandit-ji (Nehru) said that he wanted every Indian in this country to do something for the nation, to build it up into the beautiful dream that he had. He was a visionary and I tried to follow him, to do my best, whatever I could, through films.

Sangam *was Raj Kapoor's first foray into colour and he did it with predictable fastidiousness. The film was obviously designed by the maker to be a visual seduction all the way, dripping with glamour. As usual, he had put all he had into the film:*

I returned to Bombay after four months in London, only four days before *Sangam* was to be released, first in Delhi. It was a strange moment, to be poised between struggle and the fruition of that struggle. There was apprehension and reassurance. Apprehension, because that is what every film-maker feels on the eve of a release. Reassurance, because I had just finished speaking long-distance to my Delhi distributor, who told me that the sales for Friday and Saturday alone at the advance booking windows were an unprecedented record...Now, sitting all by myself in the cottage, I try to put down on paper something of the kind of impact that *Sangam* is expected to have at home and the impact it has already had abroad, among the many Westerners who saw it. I have lying before me a letter from Mr Stephan Dolby, Director of Sound at Twickenham Film Studio, which I would like to quote here, for it provides an apt starting point to analyse the impact of *Sangam* on the Western mind.

'Dear Mr Raj Kapoor,

Now that the work on your picture *Sangam* is finished, I would like to say how much I enjoyed working with you and how interested I have been in the picture. I have been very impressed by the technical quality of the film and particularly the sound recording by Mr Allauddin Khan. The small amount of post-synchronization required in this film is remarkable. Sound effects are used with great dramatic effect in the film and make a strong contribution to the story. The quality of music recording and the composition of the score is very fine.

With kindest regards and best wishes for the success of the picture.'

The letter is a fair sample of the impression the R.K. unit, our technicians, created in London, both at Twickenham Film Studio as well as Technicolor Limited. As technical men, they were struck by the quality of the work done by Radhu Karmarkar, Allauddin and M.R. Achrekar, whose achievement, they said, was of international calibre. They were impressed by the high technical gloss of *Sangam.* As Mr George Gunn of Technicolor said, 'What tremendous production values your film has, Mr Kapoor!' It would be wrong to say we were not touched by this; coming from some of the top cine-technicians of the world, it is praise indeed.

But it is not this alone which I want to write about here. It is the film itself, the thematic content and its directorial pin-pointing which made such an impact on the Western layman. We had a sample preview of the finished product in the post-synchronization theatre at Twickenham after the 'answer print' was ready. It was an impromptu preview, held at a day's notice. Yet the theatre was jam-packed. There was no place to sit and an English couple who came late went up to the projection booth and saw the entire film from the cubicle there!...After the show there was a general discussion. One person asked me, 'Why did you shoot so much of this film in a European locale, Mr Kapoor?' Why? Because, in the first place, it was a fresh new locale. In the second place, there are so many Indians living abroad today, in England as well as Germany, France, Italy and other places. They carry with them the culture of India and merge it in the wider context of Western living. It is significant that in this film I wanted to achieve a similar merging. It is not for nothing that this film is titled *Sangam.*

It could have been *Gharonda*, the title under which the original script was written. It could have been We Three and so on. But that is not the point. *Sangam* is not a mere love story, it is the propagation of an essentially Indian concept - the fusion of souls similar to the fusion of the sacred rivers Ganga and Yamuna in which the third, the mythical Saraswati, merges at the Triveni confluence. Take the story, for instance. How would the West have treated it? Gopal, the man who loves Radha and is loved by her, if he were a Westerner he would have blindly claimed her for his own. There would have been no conflict of the kind that *Sangam* embodies, for Western values are different. Their (Gopal and Radha's) love, if they were Westerners, would probably have been consummated. But here the love is essentially spiritual, and in sacrifice it is sublimated into a divine emotion which is so basic to Indian values. That is why on the eve of the release of *Sangam*, I was at pains to stress one thing - *Sangam* is not a bonanza. Not even a bonanza with a message. When you penetrate the gloss, when secondary vibrations set off by viewing this film settle within you, you will find that *Sangam* is essentially a very serious and very Indian film.

It is this thing of the Triveni, the Trinity, which is interpreted in terms of three human beings.

Take, for example, the lines of the song '*Prem patra*' (Love letter): *Tujhe Ganga main samjhunga...Tujhe Jamuna main samjhunga...Tu dil ke paas hai itni...Tujhe apna mein samjhunga...Agar mar jaaon rooh bhatkegi...Tere intezar mein...Intezar mein... Intezar mein* (I accept you as the holy river Ganga...I accept you as the holy river Yamuna...You are so close to the heart...I will think of you as my own...If I die, my spirit will wander for you...Waiting for you...Waiting for you...Waiting for you.) Since we are interpreting the theme in terms of human beings and emotions, it is obviously addressed to the beloved, but then, as with Omar Khayyam, as with the Sufis and the poet Hafiz, the beloved is another name for the Godhead. And this verse attains that divinity at the end when the ashes of the lover are immersed at the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Saraswati, at the Triveni Sangam.

Or take the burlesque song sequence in Paris. This again illustrates the basic Indianness of *Sangam*. This sequence, which, incidentally, the Westerners who saw this film enjoyed immensely, illustrates what is embodied in our *shastras* - the woman in her different aspects as the wife, the mother, the beloved, the courtesan, the friend. Here, the husband wants to visit a Paris night club. The wife insists on coming along. He refuses, saying it is not a place for respectable women! She is sarcastic, asks whether it is a place for

respectable men. But he insists that it is the job of these women to entertain men. She replies - and this is the key point - 'Is it not also the job of the wife to entertain her husband? Those women who do not do so, lose their husbands!'

I have striven in *Sangam* for a synthesis of East and West in such a way that, while being appreciated and understood by Indian audiences, it can simultaneously prove thought-provoking to Western minds...This reminds me of what three charming young ladies had to say, after seeing *Sangam* in London, about a point which would not normally strike the Western cine-goer. It concerned the emotion-graph of the gun. When the husband learns that he is an impediment to true love, he first wants to get out of the way. He takes the gun in his hand. But for the wife, marital ties are more sacred than the memory of her first love. She wants her husband to live, so the gun goes into her hand. And finally, when the lover learns that as long as he lives unhappiness will prevail, he takes the gun. A typically Indian emotion-graph, and one that I did not think many would have observed...Yes, it pleases me that so many different people who have seen *Sangam* have been excited in so many different ways about it...

* * *

I wanted a particular star actress I was working with in a film to play a role in *Sangam*. I sent her a telegram asking her to decide whether she could afford to - rather, if she wanted to - play a role in my film. She was working in Madras, so I sent the cable there, saying: *Bol Radha bol, sangam hoga ki nahin?* (Tell me, Radha, will we meet as the two rivers, the Ganga and the Yamuna, do?) For some days, there was no reply, but when it came, it said, '*Hoga... hoga... hoga!*' (We will...we will... we will...!)

It came at a time when my lyricist Shailendra was sitting with me, and that is how he wrote the popular song '*Bol Radha bol, sangam hoga ki nahin?*', in which the heroine sang back, *'Hoga... hoga... hoga!'*

* * *

'Has anybody seen my heart...?' This scene from *Mera Naam Joker*, at the very beginning of the film, affects me deeply. The performer, the Joker, has invited all his past attachments, all those he has been emotionally involved with. He is giving his last performance because he has a premonition that he is going to die...

I feel that we (artists) are probably the fortunate few in this world who have had the boon of people looking into our hearts...of having loved them, and receiving love in return. This affects me tremendously.

How different everything becomes as the perspective changes! Years ago, when *Mera Naam Joker* was only a monumental 'literary scenario' written by K.A. Abbas, I used to browse through it and I was almost frightened at the prospect of filming it! The whole canvas of it was so vast and compelling, the panorama of the world of entertainment and entertainers spreads limitlessly in this saga, the entire spread is so mighty, that it took me some time to absorb it.

One favourite method of mine of 'tuning in' is to get the reactions of close associates, and even strangers, to any theme which I am about to tackle. So I began by reading out chapters of 'Joker' to people who would come and see me. I myself was fascinated by the central character of the Joker and wanted to see how people would react to him. The reaction was instantaneous and positive in every case.

The character of the Joker is the character of 'the little man' - as embodied by me in films such as *Awaara, Shree 420* and *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* - but rounded-out and complete with spiritual dimensions. For years I have had the images of all of mankind's gods and spiritual leaders on the walls of my cottage, and to them I bow my head in prayer every night. There's Buddha, Christ and Zoroaster and India's great spiritual leader, Gandhi. The character of the Joker embodies all that is spiritual and selfless; it embodies all the teachings of the world's great spiritual leaders who led lives of suffering themselves in order to make mankind happy. From his childhood to his death, the Joker moves from one phase of his life to the next. The different women whom he loves, all leave the scars of separation and unfulfilled love on his heart. But the smile is always there on his lips. Concealing his tears, he goes about his mission in life to make people happy, to spread laughter and joy in the lives and hearts of young and old alike...

They say 'Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone'. They also say 'Many loves make a life'. Of such philosophy is this film made. There is as much depth and inner significance to the film as there is glamour and spectacle, pomp and showmanship.

Ever since I was a young lad, I have been fascinated by the life of entertainers, little realizing then that one day I would be joining their ranks. During my school days I was always short of pocket money, because what little I got, I would spend on toffees and eats! But when the circus came to town, I'd be there to see it - even if I had to crawl into the arena from under the canvas! And then the movies! I never missed a single one of them, even if I had to beg, borrow or steal the price of the admission. So this film just had to happen...

When people ask me why I made *Mera Naam Joker* and how I thought I could contain such mighty dimensions of a saga-like script within the framework of a motion picture, I smile to myself and remember my schooldays - the innumerable clowns I had seen on screen, old friends like Charlie Chaplin, the Marx Brothers, Buster Keaton, Joe E. Brown, Laurel and Hardy, and many more, the circuses I had watched, the innumerable half-forgotten clowns I had laughed at and with, the trapeze-girls and the funny performing animals. And through all this panorama of laughter, I remember the single tear in the little clown's eye. The soul of the Universe is contained in a laugh and a tear and I have vibrated to both through a crowded, intense and fully-lived life.

I don't like to talk about my work except to those who understand what I am trying to do. In twenty years of film-making I have made ten films which, taken as a whole, embody more than just an inkling of the philosophy of Raj Kapoor. All that work led surely and inevitably to the making of *Mera Naam Joker*, which is a saga of life as seen through the eyes of the entertainers. It is a saga of life as it is lived in the spotlight, as we film people live it. And on the reverse side, it is also a saga of life as it is beyond the spotlight - again, as we film people experience it. It is a spiritual odyssey of the Soul of Man; of his aspirations and his essential loveliness; of his joys and sorrows; of his loves and frustrations; of the smile painted with grease paint on his face and the painful grimace concealed within it...

To make such an immense film, to be able to put on the screen all that imagination can conceive and conjure up, is no easy task, and the making of *Mera Naam Joker* was fraught with gigantic problems. All these problems could be and were tackled on a larger-than-life scale. Gorgeous sets were conceived and erected with no consideration to cost. Amazing visual effects of 'forced perspective' and optical illusions were imagined and then we went ahead and made all our imaginings into reality! It was hard work all the way and it took its toll. But the obsession to outdo everything we had done before and to outdo everything that had ever been done on the Indian screen - that was the challenge which the script of *Mera Naam Joker* set us. We could not but face up to the challenge. A lot of elaborate work had already been done, but the biggest challenge...was the circus sequence.

One of the seven heroines of the film was a beautiful young heroine from the Russian motion picture industry! This girl played the beautiful trapeze-artiste with whom the Joker falls in love. She came to India for the shooting along with members of the Soviet State Circus. A huge circus arena was specially erected on location for what was probably the most elaborate, gigantic piece of location work ever done for any Indian film...

Mera Naam Joker became Raj Kapoor's magnificent obsession. In fact, he was thinking of a sequel even before he had completed the film. He said in an interview:

My work is my religion. My obsession. I stand or fall by the yardstick of my creative work. That is why I find questions concerning length, footage, and how many parts and so on totally irrelevant where *Mera Naam Joker* is concerned. Yes, there will be two films, *Mera Naam Joker Part I* and *Mera Naam Joker Part II*. Yes, both parts will be long. Is not human life long? And engrossing? And with never a dull moment?

* * *

The soul of the clown was never understood. Things like the death of the clown's mother, when he still has to perform - he cannot cry, because nobody can see tears in the clown's eyes, so he makes an act of it, and when his trolley is stolen, he pumps out tears from his eyes like a fountain - now that was probably too heavy for the audience. There's a saying in Punjabi, *Ma javandi sat par karm na dendi vand* (A mother can give birth to seven children, but she cannot give them their destiny). *Mera Naam Joker* is very close to my heart because just as a child who is either sick or challenged is close to his parents, a dear film, which is unfortunately a failure, gets closer to the heart. I feel the same way for *Jagte Raho*. These beautiful films - either there was something wrong with them, or they were such fantastic films that people did not understand them.

If Randhir has not had the privilege of working under my direction, I at least have been more fortunate, since I have had the opportunity to work under his direction in two films, *Kal Aaj aur Kal* and *Dharam Karam*. In his first film, *Kal Aaj aur Kal*, Daboo was a competent craftsman. The film may not have run, but then, neither did my own first film, *Aag*. *Kal Aaj aur Kal* is a film I am as proud of as I am of the films that I have directed myself...Daboo has freshness and youthful exuberance and a distinct individuality which is evident in this film, which in many ways is so different from all my films. Working with both father and son in the same film was a rare privilege...What is more, my would-be daughter-in-law, Babita, also appeared as my son's beloved in the film...it lends to the story greater authenticity. It was a great pleasure for me both as a producer and an artist to work in the film which projects a whole new image of mine, in conformity with the changing times.

My film *Mera Naam Joker* flopped. All the people who had worked with me and been by my side, and who had earned millions and millions of rupees from my films, turned their backs on me. R.K. Studio, my house, my wife's jewellery…everything that I could see was mortgaged! I thought I was finished. Then I looked up and saw that famous R.K. banner and realized that everything is mortgaged but for the name 'Raj Kapoor' - and as long as the banner is there, Raj Kapoor will be there. And I am sure that banner will be there always, shining as it shines today.

When I launched *Bobby*, it was to regain my reputation as a film-maker. As I have always believed in juvenile romanticism and adolescent love, I could identify with *Bobby* just as much as, later, millions of people did. I was confident…But when I decided that my son Rishi Kapoor would fit the role, I asked him first if he would care to work with a flop film-maker and an extremely demanding director like me!

To be very honest, I am not a very well read man. I feel that being groomed in awareness by life itself is very necessary. I came across a sentence in an Archie comic, spoken by Archie himself, something like, 'Seventeen is no longer young; we have a life of our own too and we are aware of it!' This really got me. I felt, here is something very profound.

Today's children are not as they were twenty years ago. They are much more aware of their environment, of themselves. They are much more responsible than we were twenty, thirty or forty years ago. Our forefathers were grownups, married and with children, and yet they were told: 'Shut up, you are a kid!' You can't say this to a child any more. Thinking about this resulted in my making *Bobby*.

I was inspired to make *Satyam Shivam Sundram* by Lata Mangeshkar's voice. Way back in the fifties she used to sit and delight us with her music until the wee hours of the morning. I would close my eyes and go into a trance. No wonder God doesn't endow a woman with (both) a heavenly voice and exceptional beauty. She could wreck the world! I wanted to make a film about an ordinary looking girl with a beautiful voice which ensnares a young, handsome man. I had asked Lataji to act in it. She agreed but later she backed out.

In *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* I was projecting the philosophy that it is love and faith which sanctify a relationship and that beauty is only skin-deep. If you remember, the film begins with the shot of a stone by the side of the road. Then you see people decorating the stone with flowers and 'kumkum' and praying. It then becomes their god. What turns a stone into a god? Our love, belief and worship. The message was not understood by all and the film flopped...

Today's children perhaps may not believe it, but once a miracle happened. This river (*the river near his farm in Loni*) has helped me a lot. I was shooting the climax of the film, when the whole village is flooded. It so happened that the whole farm got flooded. You could just see water everywhere. Luckily my people were there with a camera and whatever they could film, they filmed. I had my sets erected here...the temple and all. And those were the very sets which were suppose to be flooded. That was lucky. So this river has been very lucky for me.

* * *

We are shocked by nudity. We must grow up. In a country that has produced seven hundred million children, people are shocked by partial nudity! Why are we so hypocritical? Children don't grow on trees. They are made in bed. And what is immoral in showing a beautiful girl? Take cinema to the villages, give them entertainment. The only entertainment they have now is brewing alcohol, drinking it and producing children...When the film (*Satyam Shivam Sundaram*) was complete, I asked the Censor Board, 'Which is more harmful, this or what you are permitting?...You see the banners and posters all over India.

Everybody is holding a gun or a sword or something with which to kill - in a country that propagates non-violence! Can't you understand that that is what is harmful?'

* * *

I respect women and I cannot understand why I am accused of exploiting them. If a Fellini shows a woman in the nude, it is considered 'art'. If I show off a woman's beauty, it's called exploitation! ...What influenced my work of the early fifties is not necessarily what will influence the work of the eighties. It is not that idealism has been lost. I have taken up themes in which women are perhaps more active than men or are more subjected to emotional tyranny by society.

* * *

Prem Rog was my return to purposeful films, and I enjoyed making it much more because I had a strong and definite comment to make. We Indians are hypocrites. On the one hand, we eulogize womankind as being noble and great, the embodiment of motherhood. When we want to give our nation the highest respect, we address it as 'Bharat Mata' (Mother India). But in practical life we always give our women the worst possible treatment. The women in this country are degraded and humiliated. They are burnt alive. Even pet animals get better treatment in many homes. In no other country does one hear of so many cases of rape and bride burning. The birth of a girl is considered a curse in our families. Why is it so? To me, womankind symbolizes love, affection and warmth. Women deserve to be respected and put on a pedestal. They have as much right to happiness as any man. My film is a fight for their right to happiness.

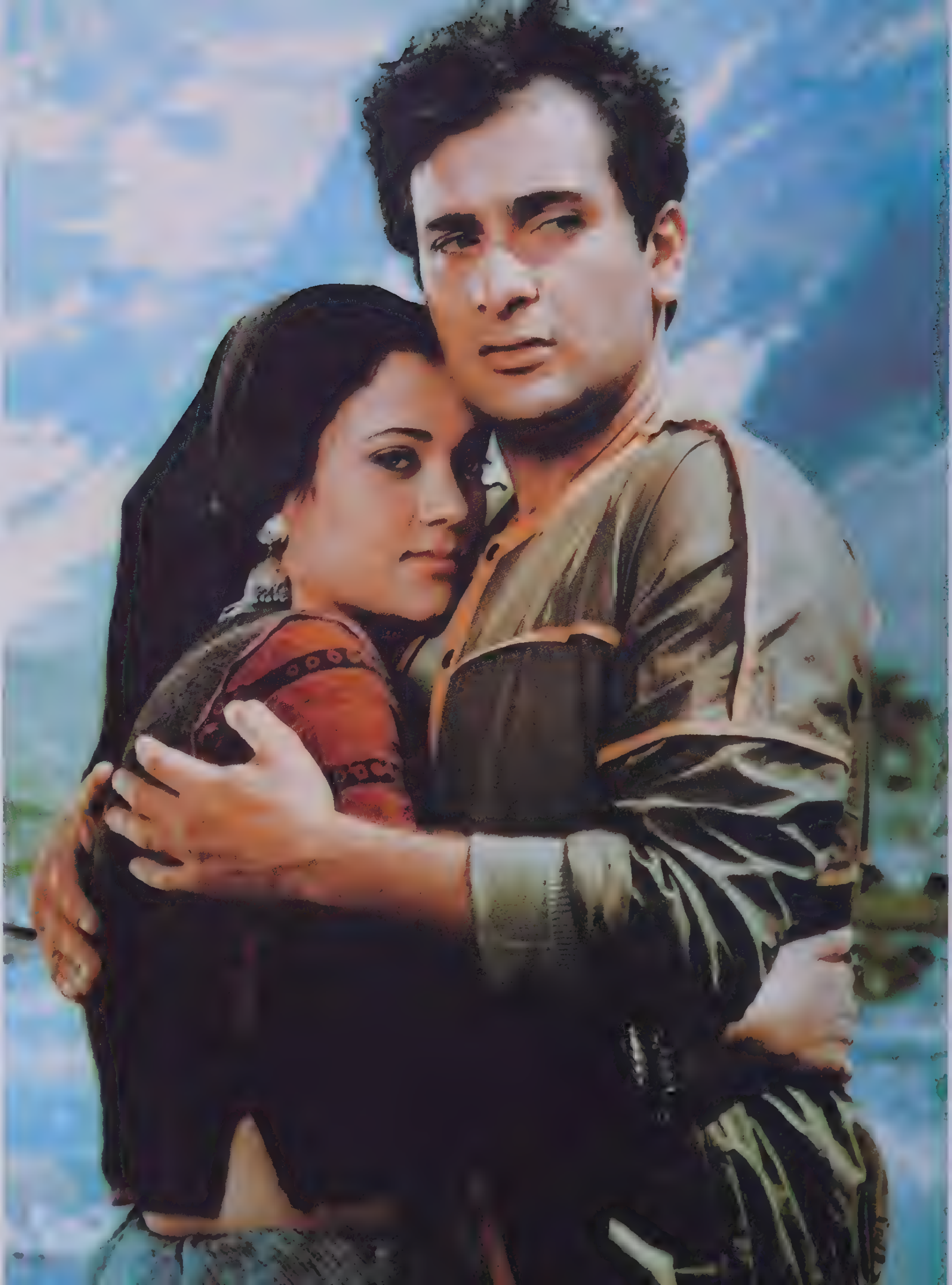
Every story has a character, a personality and destiny, and has to be moulded accordingly. My previous pictures were hero-oriented, whereas *Prem Rog* was not only a heroine-oriented film, it also had a woman as the main character, hence the presentation had to be different. I wanted to unmask the double standards of those who lay down social norms. I'm tallking about the decadence of rituals, customs and traditions which have no relevance to our life now. We live in a feudal system and call ourselves social. In the name of orthodoxy and tradition, we inflict pain and sorrow. Even today in the villages and small towns where the rich and feudal *thakurs* rule the roost, a widow is subjected to

such ostracism that life is a living hell for her…the same society permits a widower to marry a young girl just months after his wife's death. In the name of tradition and *khandaan* (lineage), young girl's are conditioned to accept the lives of outcastes…I wanted to expose the deep-rooted chauvinism of our feudal men who think that they can do what they want while their women have to tread the straight and narrow path. I am not propagating a permissive society. I only want to show up the duality in the lives of those who call themselves *thekedars* (custodians) of society. It is a pity that in this age of science we have to tackle subjects like this, but it is still a gory reality in our society… (like) rape and dowry deaths.

In *Prem Rog* I protested against the plight of a widow and tried to decorate and ornament the message with the usual box-office embellishments because I wanted a lot of people to see it. The greater the number of people who see it, more will be the awakening of public opinion.

* * *

We had gone to Calcutta to picturize portions of a song in *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*. I was at Swami Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's *matth* (seat) at the famous Dakshineshwar Temple on the banks of the river Hooghly. There a sadhu narrated to me a most fascinating incident, which became the seed for what was to become *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* twenty-five years later. The incident goes something like this: One day the famous *nanga* (naked) sadhu of Rishikesh, Totapuri Maharaj, had come to the banks of the Hooghly to meet Sri Ramakrishna and test his spiritual accomplishments. They met at a point where the Hooghly, a tributary of the Ganga, is at its filthiest and Totapuri Maharaj said: '*Ram, yeh teri Ganga kitni maili hai!*' (Ram, how dirty this Ganga of yours is.) Looking at him steadily, Sri Ramakrishna replied: 'Maharaj, this is but natural. As she flows down from Rishikesh to here, she does nothing but wash away the sins of human beings.' This incident remained in my mind and eventually led me to make *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*.



Ganga the pure, Ganga the virgin, Ganga the Himalayan beauty, Ganga the faithful. The word Ganga has so many meanings that any girl who had to portray her had to be somebody who had never been seen before and could not be identified with anything else. And that is how I got this new girl Mandakini, who looked like Ganga and who became Ganga. Although there was tremendous criticism of the so called nudity, of the scantily dressed Ganga, it was the faith in the purity of the Ganga (the river) which sustained the faith in the innocence of Ganga (the character in the film). That is what held on and, despite all the criticism, the Ganga still runs and flows.

Only he attracts me who always craves for perfection with dedication.

Raj Kapoor with (from left) Hasrat Jaipuri, Shankar-Jaikishen and Shailendra

COLLEAGUES & FRIENDS

The team of Raj Kapoor, K.A. Abbas and Vasant Sathe from Awara onwards, and then Shree 420, gave a new rhythm to popular cinema. K.A. Abbas was responsible for the proletarian ethos of the early R.K. films. As Abbas himself fondly recalls, theirs was a strange combination. Raj Kapoor was a deeply religious person; Abbas was an agnostic and a rationalist. Raj Kapoor was a vague progressive, mostly apolitical, while Abbas was a die-hard Marxist. Yet this association worked, because, as Abbas once put it, 'While Raj Kapoor is no great ideologue, he is not allergic to ideas. Indeed, with his basic sympathy for the common man, he is more than amenable to socially progressive ideas and humanist ideals, so long as their presentation does not interfere with the popularity potential of his film.'

Raj Kapoor said of his association with K.A. Abbas: 'Fortunately, I have from the very start been happy in my professional associations and it was quite early in my film career, when I was scarcely a film and a half old, that my association with K.A. Abbas began. That was Awara, an exciting intellectual adventure, which set off an exchange of ideas and a way of working between Abbas sahib and myself that continues to this day.'

[illegible] Vasant Sathe

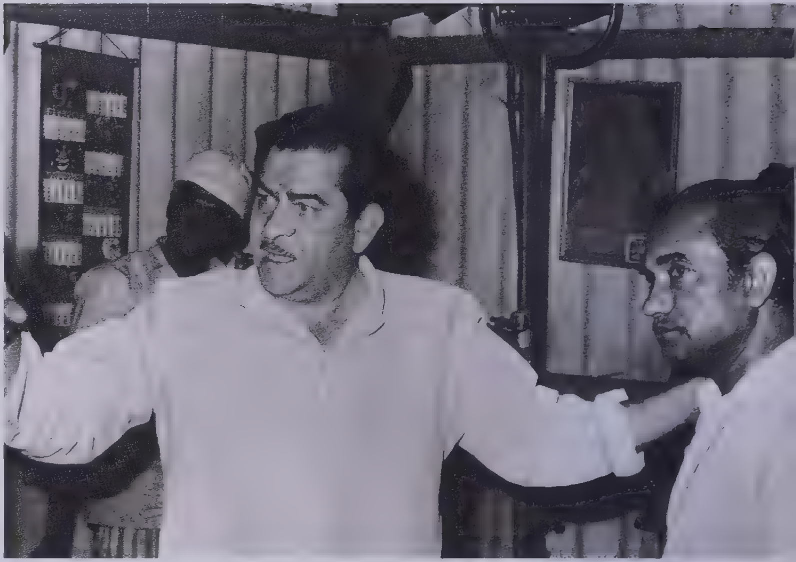
Awara embodies my earliest fashioning of the sort of 'universal humanity' symbol which was to go on taking finer shape through a succession of films until Mera Naam Joker, where it emerged as the crystallization of my entire philosophy of life. The Joker had been conceived as early as the post-Awara years and Abbas sahib's marathon script was the result of years of visualization and labour. Still, many a year and many a film was to pass before I finally mustered up enough courage to actually get down to making it.

Working with Abbas sahib has always been a stimulating intellectual experience and the long years of working together and thinking on similar wavelengths peaked in Mera Naam Joker. The Joker symbolizes my entire philosophy of life, love and fulfilment.

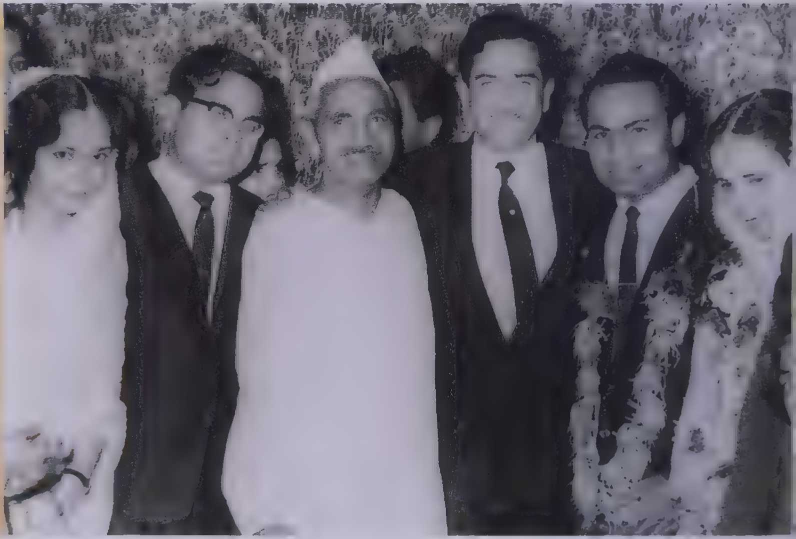
Written and visualized chapter wise, the story moves through the various stages of the Joker's life. At each stage he meets a different woman, each stage culminating in its own peculiar disillusionments. Through this process of love and sorrow, the Joker learns much, teaches much, until the twilight of his life brings the film to its most memorable climax, a climax which attains supreme Christian proportions.

That is why the making of this film is such a challenge to me... to meet this challenge I have had to first put in a lifetime of hard labour in films.

I was influenced by Orson Welles' camera work during Barsaat. Aag had very low-key lighting. The contrast between black and white was very vivid... I wanted my cameraman to give me black and grey pictures. But at that time nobody liked my low-key lighting. Those days, bright pictures were in vogue. The first question I put to Radhu Karmakar, when he came to see me (he had just done a film for Bombay Talkies called Milan) was, 'Can you show me the night scene of Milan?' I liked what I saw and he became my cameraman for Awara. I liked Radhu's contract lighting. It was beneficial for the mood of my scene, especially the dramatic scenes. Awara is one of my best photographed films. It was revolutionary, and the credit goes to Radhu Karmakar.

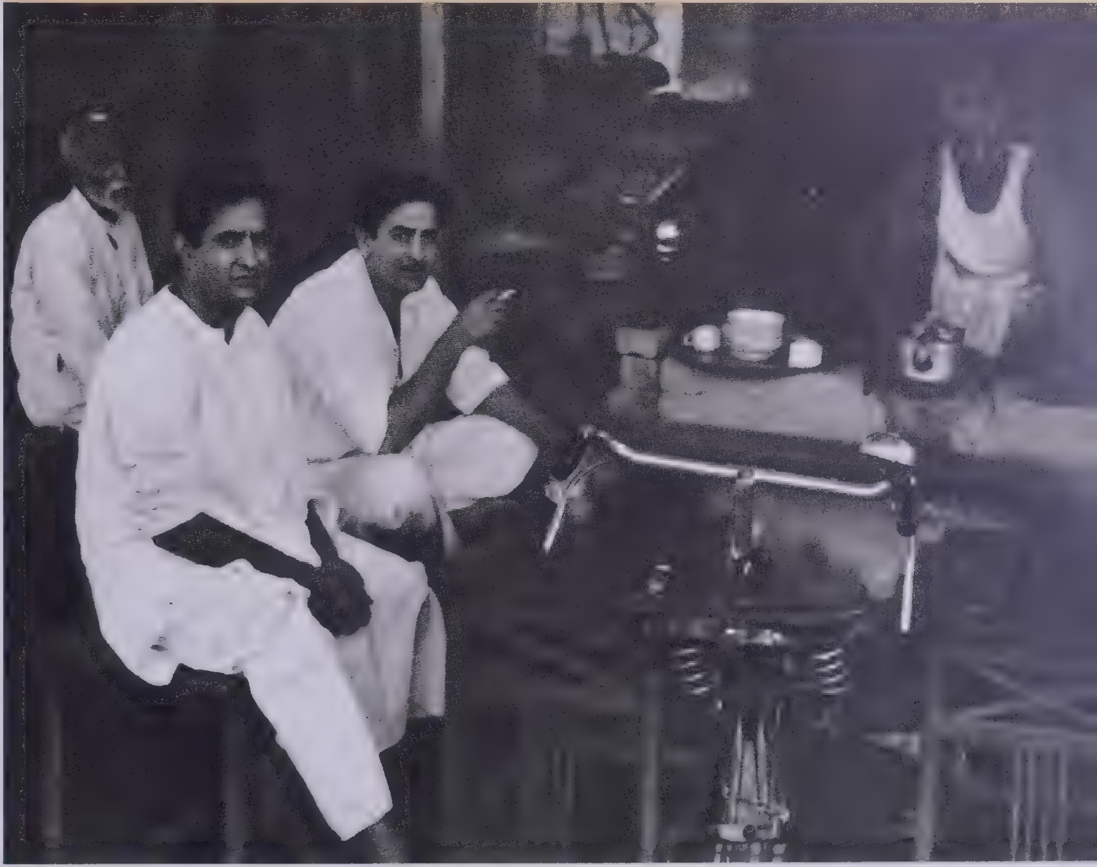


Paying tribute to Raj Kapoor, the Hindujas recall: 'In 1957 we started distributing his many masterpieces to world audiences. At the many premiers we organized overseas, fans became ecstatic! This business association transformed into a close family relationship between us and Raj, Krishnaji (the centre of his life) and his gifted children. This relationship with Raj Kapoor remains among our fondest memories.



I salute those who put in their best without worrying about returns for their hard work. If you want to attract my attention, show me perfection and dedication at work. To me it is not important where one is on the ladder, as an assistant or as an executive, even though it may be my own son at work. Only he attracts me who always craves for perfection with dedication.

I make films for the common man, so it is important to be amidst them, the common men and women. Here in the common man's wayside restaurants, one gets an opportunity to meet a lot of people and witness life. People meet you with love and affection. They have no malice and ego in them. In these places, I get the same welcome as I did when I was a child—the only difference being that in my childhood I used to eat on credit and now I pay cash!

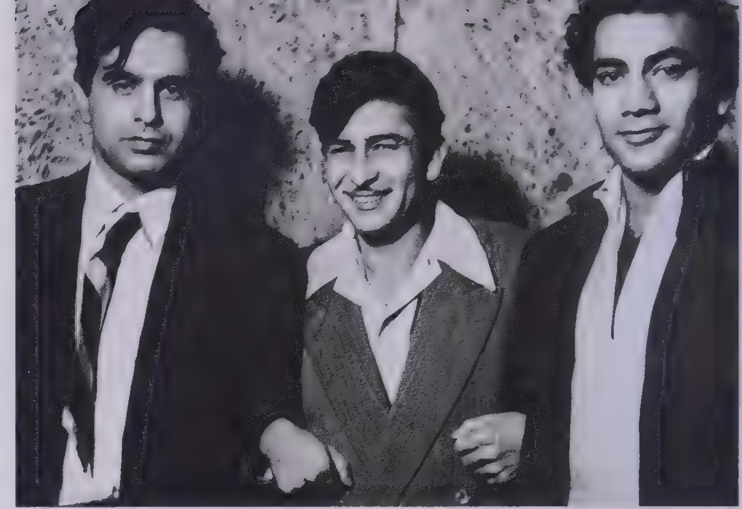


Raj Kapoor was the final torch-bearer of a line of great producers and directors like Guru Dutt, Bimal Roy and Mehboob Khan. They bred not only popular hits, popular stars and profits, but genres of their own, at once typical and universal. Bimal Roy pioneered the depiction of everyday reality on the movie screen. Guru Dutt's forte was finesse, be it in crime thrillers or in autobiographical films of a disconsolate romantic. Mehboob Khan, with his film Mother India, ran the widest gamut of Indian emotions. But Raj Kapoor's contribution to Indian cinema was his own brand of simple social messages wrapped in intense passion.

In 1955 Raj Kapoor saw Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali in Madras, where he was shooting for a film called Chori Chori. Till two days after he was dumbfounded with admiration. He asked Satyajit Ray to direct a film for R.K. Films, but this never happened, as Satyajit Ray confessed he was not very conversant with the Hindi language.

Satyajit Ray on Raj Kapoor: 'My association with Raj Kapoor dates back thirty years. He was a friend. He saw my first film, Pather Panchali, and was so moved by it that he gave me a carte blanche to do whatever I wanted for him. But I did not take up his offer then as it would have involved working in Hindi. That, however, did not in any way hamper our friendship. He was warm, friendly, affectionate towards me till the end. One could call him dildariya. He did not have any affectations about him; he was totally open.

'I saw him first in Aag and found him very promising. Other films of his that I remember are Awara and Mera Naam Joker. I liked the first part of Mera Naam Joker. However, Shree 420 was, perhaps, his best film. The last film of his that I saw was Bobby. After that I lost interest. Raj Kapoor himself admitted that he made films for the masses, not people like us. It was the unaffected side of Raj that I liked most. He had great regard for me and he respected me. As for his contribution to Indian cinema, I think he was an extremely good craftsman and a master showman.'



As an actor Raj Kapoor was very popular and went to the top of the box office charts in the fifties, along with Dilip Kumar and Dev Anand. While Dilip Kumar was the soulful, melancholic sort and Dev Anand the urban sophisticate, Raj Kapoor played the heartbreaking simpleton.

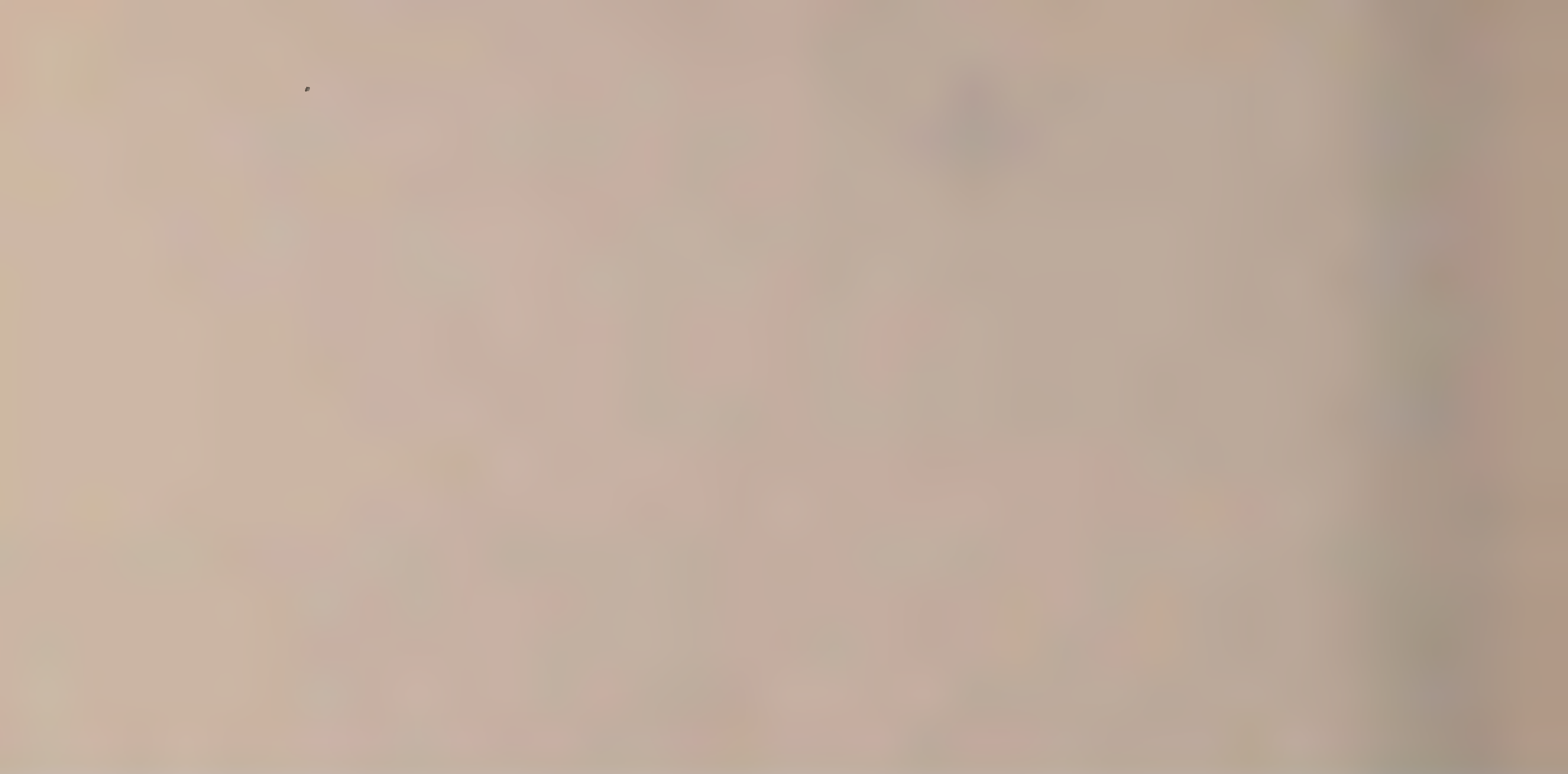
Prem Nath, Raj Kapoor's brother-in-law, joined him when he was on the threshold of building his own career. Both made their debut with Aag, and Prem Nath went on to greater heights with films like Barsaat, a cameo appearance in Awara, Dharam Karam and Bobby. The combination of Raj Kapoor, the introvert, and Prem Nath, the extrovert, was a team which strengthened the Raj Kapoor phenomenon.

Prem Nath relates: 'When Prithvi Theatre was staging its play Deewar in Nagpur, both Raj Kapoor and I used to play the role of Ramu, the servant. It was Holi, a day spent in revelry, drinking and singing festive songs. Having overdone the celebration, Raj lost his voice and was unable to go on beyond the first act of the evening show. He sent me on stage in his place, saying: "The audience cannot hear me, go and play my role in the next act because the show must go on." I did, and no one noticed the change.'

Clockwise from top left: With Dilip Kumar; with Dilip Kumar and Prem Nath; with Rajendra Kumar, Dilip Kumar and Shammi Kapoor.

After Raj Kapoor's death, Rajendra Kumar recalled: 'When Mukesh, Raj Kapoor's dearest friend and colleague, died in USA of heart failure, Raj-ji and I went to the Bombay airport to receive the body. When the coffin came out of the hold, Raj-ji looked at it and said sorrowfully, "This friend of ours went as a passenger and has come back as luggage." It is ironical that destiny took Raj Kapoor too to Delhi as an honoured passenger and brought him back, like Mukesh, as cargo. The following morning, when Mukesh's body was to be taken from his house for cremation, all the arrangements for the funeral were made by Raj-ji. As he respected all religions, he had called priests of all faiths to recite prayers. I was standing next to him. He looked at me and said, "Brother, remember when I go, to do the same for me." And we did.'

With Rajendra Kumar (left) and Mukesh (right).



In our country, our whole existence, our lifestyle, our cultural fabric is wedded to music. Our life, our birth is wedded to music. Our death is wedded to a lament, which is also music. Our rituals, our gods, our goddesses, our festivals, our harvesting, everything is music, music, music... Where words fail, it is music that conveys much more than all words put together.

MUSIC

A very big name which has been a constant companion throughout to many melodies in my films is Lata Mangeshkar. Barsaat was the first time Lata was introduced in my films. It was as if I had been waiting for her to enter, to make Raj Kapoor and his music what it is today. People have told you of my interest in music but they may not have spoken of my prerna (inspiration) which is Lata.

There was Mukesh—my soul, my voice, I was a mere body. It was he who sang to the hearts of the people all over the world, not me. Raj Kapoor was an image, just a carcass of flesh and bones. When he (Mukesh) died, it was destroyed. I felt, there goes my breath, there goes my soul. I know what went away from me. There was a void, a vacuum and then I had to get over it and go on. This is the price an artist pays.

They say it is the singer and not the song, but for me it is the singer and the song. Singers like Lata-ji, Mukesh-ji, Rafi-ji, Manna Dey have travelled great distances with me, all through my path in films. I have gained a lot from them. I have gained a lot from from my lyricists Shailendra and Hasrat Jaipuri, from my music directors Ram Ganguli, Shankar and Jaikishen, Laxmikant and Pyarelal, Ravindra Jain. Actually, they are the essence, I am the mere conductor. The essence is their faculty, their talent, the art of my colleagues. I am shining in their glory.

Above: With his celebrated music directors, Kalyanji-Anandji and Shankar Jaikishen

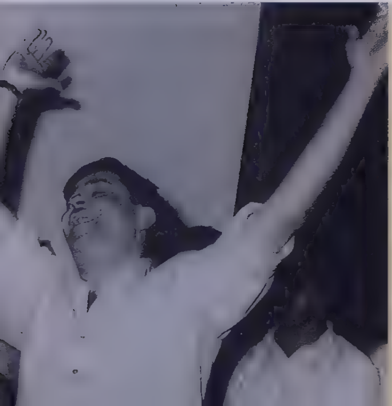
My subjects always unerringly suggested a particular kind of music style to me—that style would work out audio-visually right in the final unfolding of the film. There was a certain vigour and aggression called for in the style of music. It is very important to me that the songs in my films have a meaning and rhyme—that certain something which touches the heart at first hearing. My screen personality has never been a thing apart from my music. You could say that at times music in my films even replaced dialogue. No song more succinctly sums up my approach to film-making, indeed to life, than 'Jeena yahaan, marna yahaan'. Any piece of music that goes into my film has to come from the heart. I am made that way, I can't accept cacophony for melody. To me music is that which touches the heart.

Shailendra, Shankar, Jaikishen and Mukesh were all part of the charmed inner circle of Raj Kapoor. It is interesting to recount how Shailendra came to write lyrics for R.K. Films, for it says a lot about Raj Kapoor as an artist and a human being.

Shailendra, a railway employee who wrote poetry, was a leftist by conviction. He was an intense young man, and a poet of the new school, a poet of the people. He wrote colloquially, and the sentiments he voiced were of the masses. Like any idealist, Shailendra was a little disdainful of films and film-people. Raj Kapoor had heard Shailendra at a mushaira and asked him to write for him. Shailendra refused. Not a man to give up easily, Raj invited Shailendra over to 'The Cottage' and, after a long session, repeated his offer. Again Shailendra refused.

'All right, forget it. But here's this envelope,' Raj Kapoor said, putting some money into an envelope. He sealed the envelope and wrote Shailendra's name on it. 'I'm keeping it in the office. Any time you're in trouble and need money, come and take it away. No strings attached.' Inevitably, there came a time when the fiery poet needed money. His eldest son was about to be born, and he needed to pay hospital bills. He came and took the envelope away. Raj was informed of it, but he made no effort to contact the poet. Some days later Shailendra himself came with a sheaf of poetry. 'These are for you,' he said. 'You don't have to do this,' Raj said. 'Do you think I'll take charity?' the poet snapped.

And thus Shailendra became an imporatnt addition to the R.K. treasury, and went on to become one of the most memorable figures of Indian cinema.



I do not say that I compose music, but I conduct it. I get my music done the way I would visualize it—at what particular moment the woodwinds should flow, at what intensity and volume the percussion... now that is the art of conducting. So it definitely has a very distinct quality to it, no matter who the composer or the writer is.

From the earliest days, I have been interested in music. In fact, my first ambition was to be a music director. I even sang in my earlier films like Chitchor, Chitor Vijay, Jail Yatra and Gopinath. My interest in music goes back to my childhood, with Papa-ji in theatre in Calcutta. What attracted me most was Rai Chand Boral's music room. Later, when we came to Bombay, Papa-ji joined Narayan Rao Vyas's Academy of Music in Matunga where for three years I learnt classical music, playing the harmonium, tabla, sitar, etc. I was also with Anilda (Anil Biswas) for some time. I remember, as a clapper boy at Bombay Talkies I was suspended for a week for being absent in the music hall when director Ramsey was looking for me. Then in Prithvi Theatre, after the shows, we used to sit together to compose tunes. I was very fond of composing tunes. I composed a few with Ram Babu (Ram Ganguli); also with Shanker and Jaikishen—one was a harmonium player and the other a tabla player. And it was there that this team of Shanker–Jaikishen and Raj Kapoor was born.

From Barsaat onwards my music has not been something that just comes in, but an integral part of the fabric of the film. Music is one form of entertainment that reaches millions in this poor developing country, and it is the cheapest. People want their music, their dances, their thrills, their magic shows, circus, fights, everything. Music being an integral part of our cultural life, you cannot just root it out... Hence even in a film like Jagte Raho, originally without music, I found two or three situations which needed songs. (But) I always try to give (songs) which carry on the movement of the story and if I am not able to do it, and if (the song) just stays there, stagnates, I cut it off. Many a time I have recorded a song, picturized it, and then thrown it out. This happened in Sangam; the song filmed in Venice was not used. Also in Satyam Shivam Sundaram.

* * *

Explaining his style of choosing, recording and filming a song, Raj Kapoor said in an interview:

'Now I am working with Laxmikant–Pyarelal. They ask what is it that you want. I explain the situation, the preceding scene, the following scene, the overall impact of the sequence, get the words written, give it to them, tell them that when the scene is

being enacted by the artistes, the emotional content is to this pitch and the background music will be something like this—and from here the song emerges… so at least they have a tremendous lot of information on what the song is all about and then they compose it, and it becomes easier, because bit by bit I start visualizing the song.

‘In Bobby, Laxmikant–Pyarelal had a tune—beautifully done, simply thought. But there was something missing in it, something which didn’t connect. “Hum tum ek kamre mein band hon, aur chabi kho jaye…” As far as the tune, melody and rhyme are concerned, it was (just about) okay. So what to do? Then an idea struck us—“Socho kabhi aisa ho to kya ho”. That was it. With that (new line) there could be fantasies and fantasies… So we try to search for things like that. Sometimes we find them, sometimes we don’t.

‘In Prem Rog there are six songs, and they are written beautifully, with thought derived absolutely from the story, from the situations, the characters…Characters express (themselves) in dialogue, or in verse. So music is a pitch of an emotion; where words fail to render an emotion, one bursts into song. One song in Prem Rog was picturized in Holland, in a tulip field. At one point in the film the boy tells the girl, “When you smile it’s as if a million flowers have bloomed.” Now this thought—“'a million flowers”—stuck in my mind. And where do I get a million flowers? I tried all over. I went to the UP government, there is a valley of flowers, in Badrinath, but it is not easily accessible. I had seen this place in Holland, so I thought about shooting there, and was clever enough to camouflage its geographical origin of a modern city of Europe. Well, I think it’s going to be one of the finest picturized songs in years.’

* * *

As one critic observed, Raj Kapoor poured every ounce of his creative energy into the shaping of the music in his films. He worked like an architect, building his films on the foundation of music. He knew exactly what he wanted from his composers, lyricists and singers. He was not one to be easily satisfied. He would coax, cajole, badger his team and call it a day only when he had got the songs perfect, the tune right, the words correct, the orchestra rich and the recording flawless. Then he would lie back and start thinking of a hundred different ways of bringing that song to life on screen.

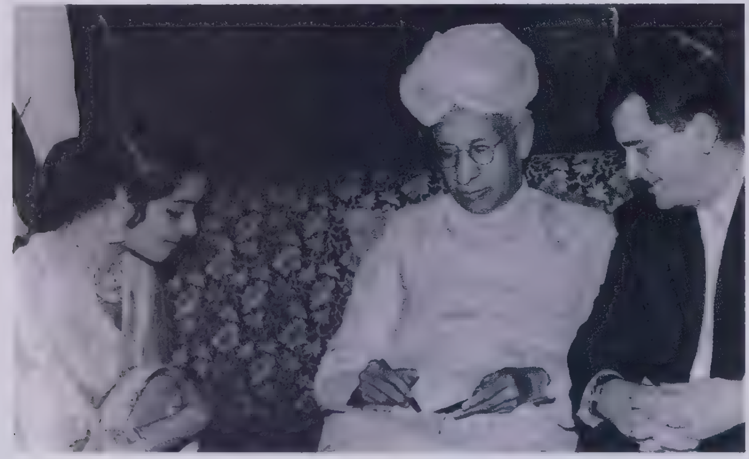
A showman and a politician run on the same platform...They sell dreams.

Raj Kapoor, Shankar-Jaikishen and others from the film industry with Indira Gandhi.

POLITICAL MEETINGS

I have always believed, and I say it again emphatically, that a showman and a politician run on the same platform... They sell dreams...some dreams come true, some don't.

Making a movie is a bit like contesting an election, but at least you can rig an election, you can't rig public opinion!



Clockwise from right: With Jawaharlal Nehru and Vyjayanthimala; with Padmini and Dr S Radhakrishnan; receiving the National Award from Dr Rajendra Prasad, President of India, 1958

Once, after Jawaharlal Nehru returned from a trip to the Soviet Union which included a meeting with Stalin, he happened to bump into Papa-ji. Nehru-ji did not watch many movies, but he knew my father well. He took my father aside and said, 'What is this film "Vagabond" (*Awara*) that your son has made? Stalin was talking about it all the time.'

Above. Receiving the Padma Bhushan from the President of India, V.V. Giri (1971)

Left. Receiving the National Award from the President of India, Dr Zakir Husain [illegible]

Mine is not a one-man show, I have always worked through institutions, and my contribution has always been only as a kind of fountainhead.

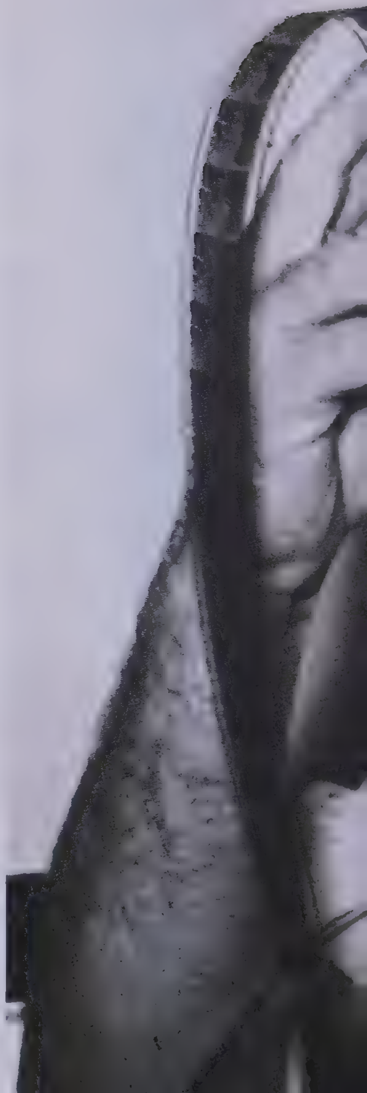
Raj Kapoor at an outdoor shoot (1970)

WORK

I had to learn a lot to know cinema. One was that editing, montage, is one of the most important things one must know if one wants to become a man of cinema. You create the rhythm within yourself. Footage is what teaches you rhythm. A foot extra can ruin a scene and a foot less would also be as damaging. It's really a very creative process. Films are made on the writing table and the editing table; the rest is mere jugglery...

I don't think I have done as much for any other film of mine as for *Prem Rog*. The story was complete but the screenplay was written over a period of probably a year or so...And you cannot be precise about the length of a film. You may exceed...(and) I have always exceeded.

For instance, you have this big set (for *Prem Rog)*, and when you enter the set for the first time everything is new because we do not have the system of having models prepared, making a scenario, preplanning camera movements, cuts. It is as if the whole thing unfolds in front of you for the very first time, and you start thinking, how is this to be transposed to celluloid? The very first shot I take is one showing the entire topography. The whole thing is fresh and new and you want to show - well, here is the staircase, here's the portico, here are the arches, these are the pillars, this is the veranda and from here a person comes down the staircase and walks through the portico and then he confronts a character and speaks. Later, when you have shot the film and are nearer its completion, you edit the shot in the context of the previous scene and the subsequent scenes, and you find that this length of shot - forty or fifty feet - is not necessary. The set has been repeated so many times through the film that people



have become gradually aware of what is where, whether this is the first floor or the second floor or the kitchen. So that long first shot was unnecessary.

I am at this very stage of *Prem Rog* now, where I am trying to prune. By and large I have done it... but it is a very, very painful thing. Especially if you also happen to be the producer (of the film) because you have unnecessarily spent so much time and labour and money. And I keep telling myself: 'You idiot, Raj Kapoor, you will never learn...you always overdo it.'

I am afraid all these years have not been able to teach me. But then, suppose I had not shot it all and I needed it. The set wouldn't be there anymore. What would I do then? So it is better to have more shots with you so that you can montage: you can have birds flying, you can have ripples on the water, you can have swaying trees and fields. Perhaps you may not use all those shots, but if you have them you

would like to put bits of them in to suggest, say, an approaching storm.

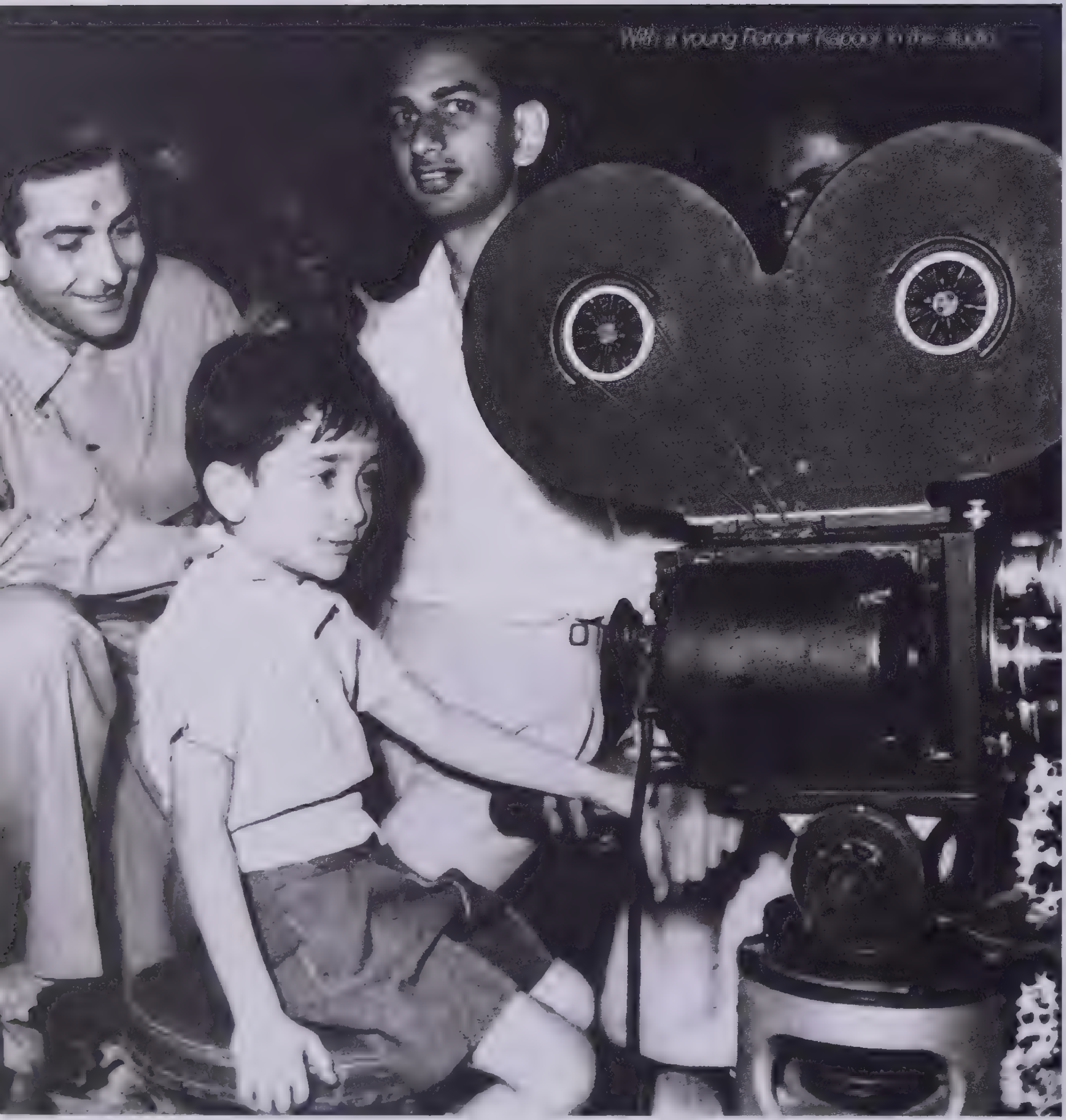
* * *

My early films - *Aag, Barsaat* and *Awara* - were influenced by the foreign films I saw...Mostly by the three Italians who had visited the 1952 film festival in Bombay: Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio de Sica and Cesare Zavatini. They were the pioneers of the ' neo-realism' movement in Italy. I was tremendously moved by de Sica's films, especially *Miracle In Milan, Bicycle Thief* and *Shoeshine Boy*. Zavatini was de Sica's screenplay writer and I had long chats with him. Franc Capra was also in India for the festival and I had long talks with him too.

The Capra films, *It Happened One Night* and *Mr. Deeds Goes To Washington*, influenced me too. I was also an admirer of Cecil B. de Mille, I saw all his films, but the ones that impressed me most were *Ten Commandments, Reap The Wild Wind* and *The Greatest Show On Earth*.

De Sica and Zavatini brought to the screen what they saw and felt. Something real. Slices of life. In an American film you could never see a little boy piddling. In *Bicycle Thief* the boy piddles and the father waits on the side of the road with his bicycle...it is so simple...it is so real. However, the most effective part of the whole movement was the allegory that was part of the film. That was very important.

The other thing was coming out of the four walls of the studio and making films outdoors. Many of these directors told me, 'How lucky you are! In India you have the sun shining all the year round...why do you shoot inside a studio? With such brilliant light outside, why do you shoot with artificial landscapes? We work in the studios only when it is necessary.'



With a young Randhir Kapoor in the studio

Quality products always take time. This medium takes up so much of one's energy. Even when you're just thinking, planning or daydreaming about the films, it is work...One of my favourite anecdotes is about Joseph Conrad. Somebody once asked him what was the most difficult thing he had to do connected with his work and he replied, 'It is to convince my wife that when I am staring out of the window I am really working.'

Even when I am giving an interview I am thinking of the shape of the films to come, the scene to be shot, the scenes already shot. So, am I not working?

Even in his last days, when he was very unwell, Raj Kapoor had work on his mind. Randhir, who completed and released his father's unfinished project Henna *in 1990, remembers: 'It is uncanny that my father, just a day before he was hospitalized, gave me five thousand rupees and said: "I want you to direct* Henna*."'*

* * *

'The cottage' was Raj Kapoor's cherished retreat, built even before R.K. Studios, which came up next to it. His cottage was the nerve centre of his creative, professional and personal life. Raj Kapoor functioned from this cottage, squatting cross-legged on the ground - whether it was attending to business matters or discussing a script. On the walls hung images of all the gods and prophets of all the religions of the world, an old portrait of his father Prithviraj Kapoor, Nargis in Awara, *Padmini in* Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai, *and Vyjayanthimala in* Sangam.

This place - let me begin with these great, wonderful people whose portraits are hung on the wall. I call it my altar, it represents all religions, they are great souls, they are people who have been great thinkers and who have brought mankind to a state where today we feel and know a little, if not in totality, of what love is all about. What peace is all about and what spiritualism is all about. We may not have attained absolute transcendental knowledge of it, nevertheless we are gradually getting to it... ascending to it.

This place for me is still the room it was way back then - even before my studio was built - in a quiet place, not the thickly populated suburban area of Bombay that it is today. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of peace that you find in this little cottage. It is a very small place, but it has great memories. The sanctity of this place comes from a great many artistes who have contributed to what Raj Kapoor is today or what R.K. Films is today...For me it is like the sanctum sanctorum, a place where, though many have left me and I myself am on the last leg of my life, there will always be somebody to take over and perpetuate what people have given and left behind. I am immensely enriched when I sit here and think. I look at them, all my colleagues, and I thank them, and I pray, let us not wither away, let this place be consolidated, no matter what happens, so that it can bring the minds of people together and contribute to the art of cinema.

* * *

I fundamentally believe that the film art is nobody's art except the film-maker's, the director's art. The music director sees one part of the film, the writer has his part, the art director has his. The complete thing is only in the mind of the director. And the director is also a human being, susceptible to all kinds of moods, problems - a fight with the wife at home, children going to school and being knocked down by a car or something, or it's one of those days when the actor is late, when the actress says she didn't get her gown in time and so on and so forth...You keep your cool and get on with the job. Sometimes you are successful, sometimes you are not.

Film is a collective enterprise, it is not an individual, personal expression like writing or painting. When a writer begins to write, all he needs is paper and pen, or a typewriter, and when he doesn't like what he has written, he just tears it up, throws it away and starts writing again. Probably a painter does something similar. But a film-maker - unfortunately, by the time he really sees what he has done, he cannot go back and start again. He has no money...This business is expensive. But once you have gone into it, what you do is pray to God; or try to believe each time that it is the biggest box-office hit you are making.

An artiste is one who has all the qualities of politeness, softness and the ability to attract the love of others, and does (any) work as his own. If you can become an artiste loved by all, then there cannot be a greater artiste than you.

Another thing I have learnt is never to make anything I don't believe in. I have made films that I am convinced about, that I believe in. It has taken me a lot of time searching for scripts, or sometimes I have had scripts but I have not made them till I have got the right people, for instance, *Sangam*. And there have been scripts that have just come my way, like *Awara, Shree 420, Jagte Raho* and so forth. Sometimes I am offered films or scripts that are supposed to be box-office material, but I have never been enamoured of them. Not that my films have not been popular or box-office hits; perhaps they have been much more than all the others put together. Nevertheless, what convinces me is the human value in a script.

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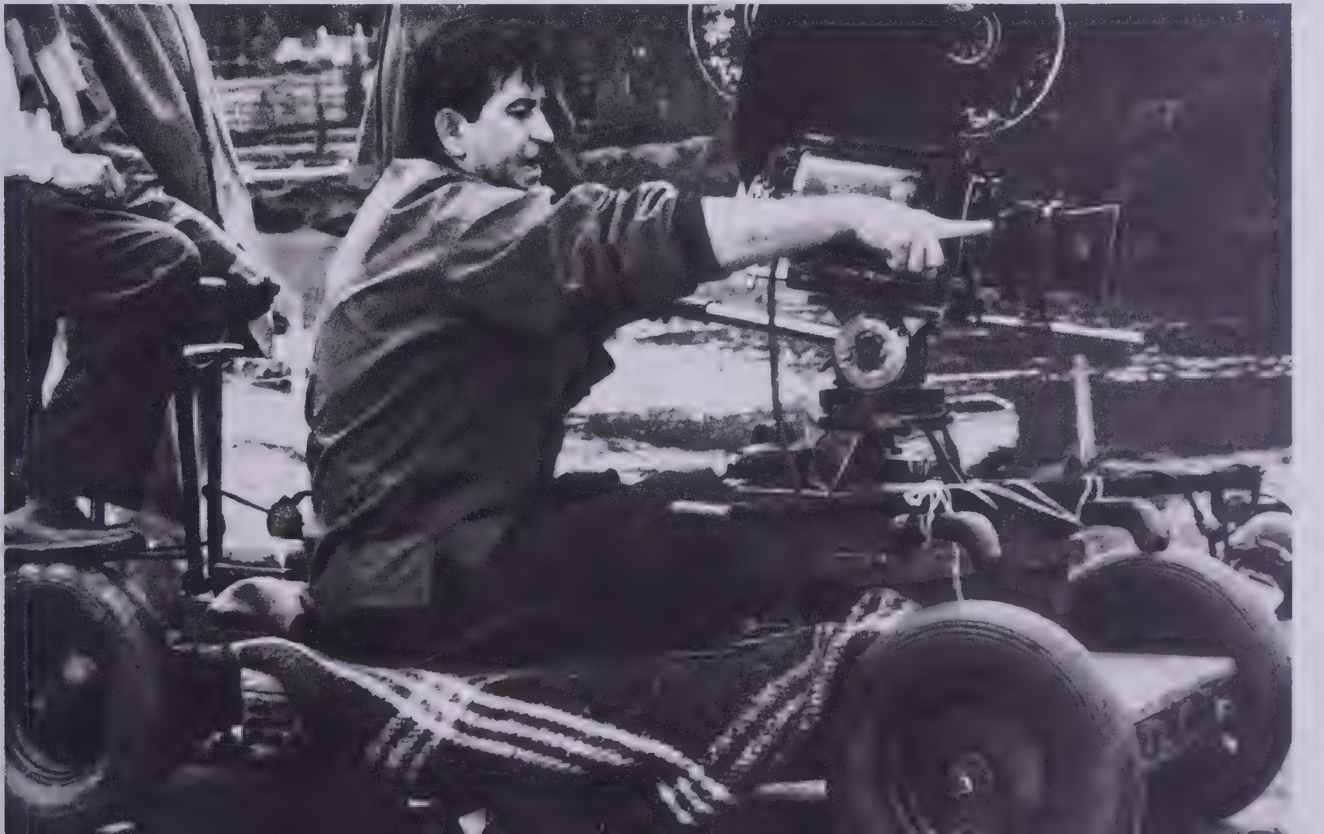
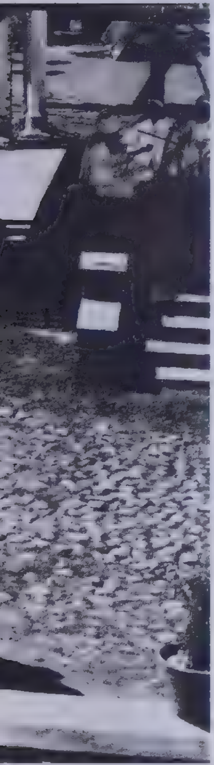


Different people view their birthdays in different ways. For most people, it is a day of celebration and merry-making. My own birthday has more significance for my workers than for myself. They enjoy themselves on that day, which is declared a workers' holiday in the proletarian precincts of R.K. Studios!

I myself have always measured my birthday in terms of my work and my films. It has always been a custom that every new film was launched at R.K. with a muhurat performed by my father Prithviraj on 14 December (Raj Kapoor's birthday).

So my life is work, and my work is cinema. I dream cinema, I breathe cinema, I live cinema. I am...just a simple man...I don't claim that I have any academic qualification, except that I have been quite aware of what is around me and hence have got to know a little bit of human philosophy and human kindness and compassion...and that is probably what has given birth to the clown in me, and that clown, even at the cost of tears, tries to make everybody happy. For I believe that every human being has a beautiful self, which is the clown.



Cinema is one of the most effective of the mass media and can touch millions because it is audio and visual at the same time. It gets you thinking and can trigger you off emotionally. All films, irrespective of their language, have a universal appeal. The message transmitted through them reaches the hearts of the people. Films in Russian or Turkish or Pakistani have no difference. Whether American or Russian, a mother's tears have the same effect. Similarly, people's smiling faces are the same. Tears and smiles do not require a language. These can be experienced anywhere in the world with the same understanding.

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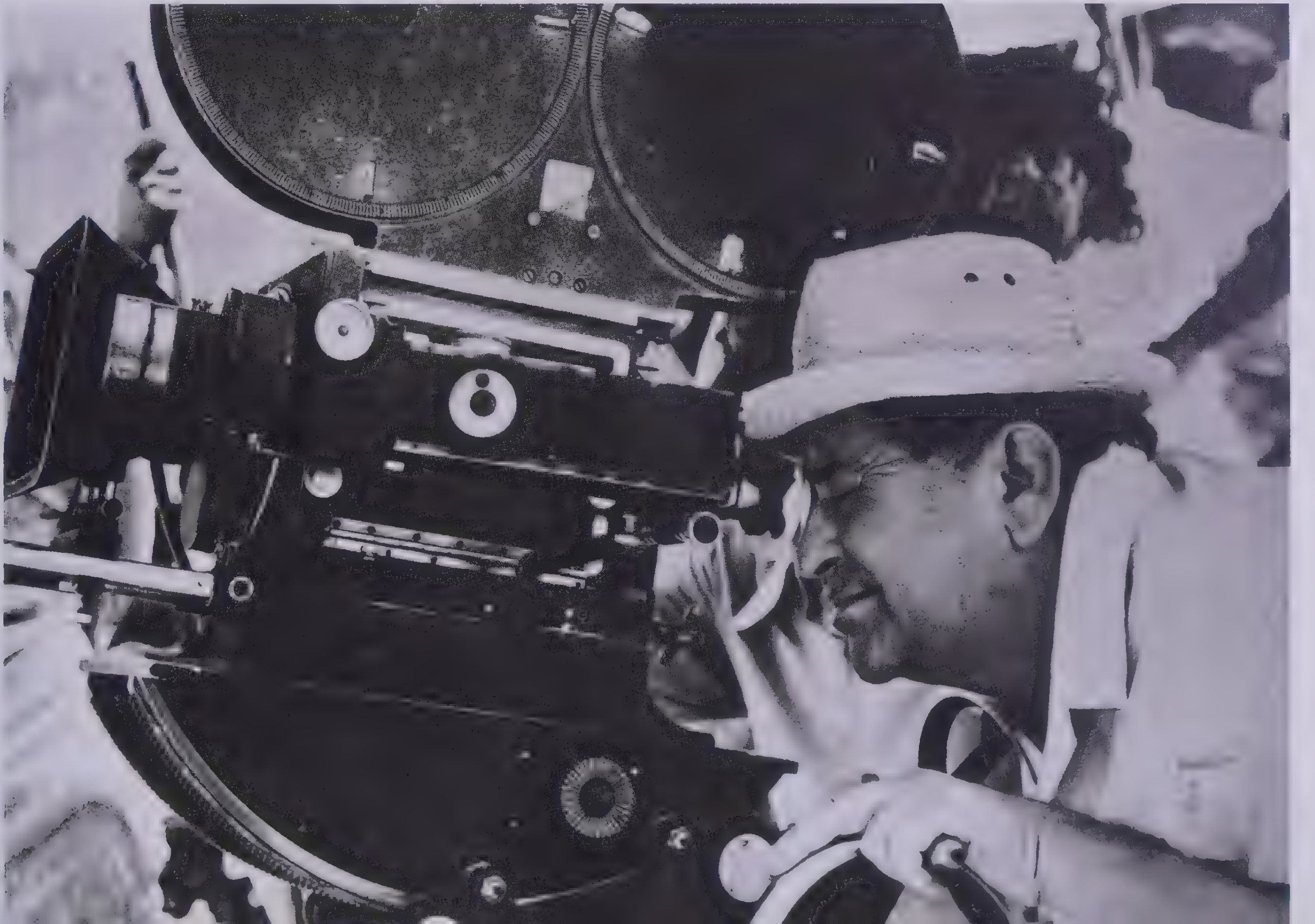
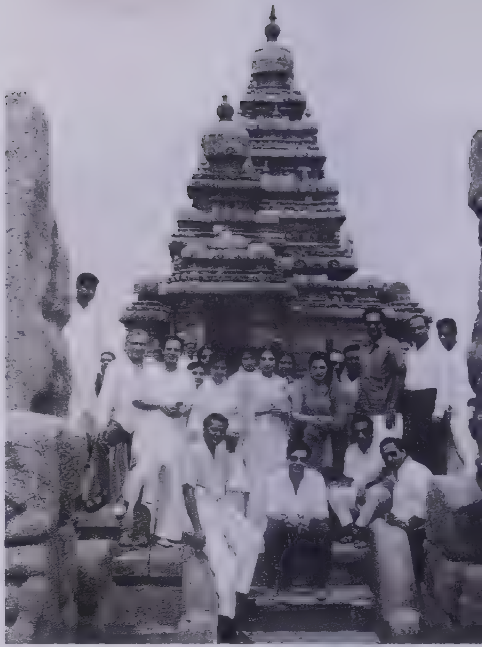




'It is so well knit a team that I don't even have to spell out what I want,' Raj Kapoor said of his team at R.K. Films and Studios. What held the key to the team's success was its continuity. Radhu Karmakar, the cameraman who shot Awara, *directed the camera unit in Raj Kapoor's last film,* Ram Teri Ganga Maili, *and was to play the same role in the making of* Henna *after Raj Kapoor's demise. S. Kala Chandra was Raj Kapoor's assistant director for thirty-eight years. Shankar-Jaikishen scored the music for Raj Kapoor's films till Jaikishen's death in 1970. Journalist V.P. Sathe and writer K.A. Abbas collaborated with Raj Kapoor for years on films like* Barsaat, Awara *and* Shree 420. *Shailendra, once he began writing lyrics for R.K. Films, continued to do so till his death. Hasrat Jaipuri also wrote lyrics regularly for Raj Kapoor.*

Raj Kapoor's distributors also supported him all through, even with his last film Ram Teri Ganga Maili. *This last film came at a crucial period for the fabulous showman. Financially, he was with his back to the wall. There was simply no money left for all the vital last-minute production work so important to satisfy the perfectionist that Raj Kapoor was. As far as his distributors were concerned, commitments were fully drawn, and in some cases overdrawn. He nevertheless completed his film, and everything hinged on how the film would fare at the box-office. And then the blow fell. Raj Kapoor never had any interest in the commercial side of his business, which always made him a victim of tax arrears. He was faced with the grave prospect of attachment from the income tax department. There was no one he could turn to, except his distributors. They had faith in him and rose to the occasion in his hour of need. The arrears were paid and the calamity averted.* Ram Teri Ganga Maili *went on to become the biggest hit of its time.*

After Shree 420, *Raj Kapoor was often referred to as 420, especially by his fans, and he delighted in it. Though on one occasion, he wasn't so delighted at first. Raj Kapoor recalled the incident on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of* Sangam *at Apsara theatre, when he appeared on the stage along with most of his unit members.*

Apparently, when he returned after a long trip to the USSR, one of his workers at R.K. Studios greeted him with 'Hallo 420!'. Raj Kapoor was taken aback and wondered if it was just a joke or the worker, Damodar, was being disrespectful. He tried to *dismiss it lightly, but he could not get it out of his mind. Eventually he called the worker and asked him to explain just what he had meant. Was it a joke? Delighted at the opportunity to explain how clever he'd been - so clever that even his boss had missed it - Damodar said: 'I only wanted to inform you that* Sangam *has completed sixty weeks at Apsara, which means 420 days!'*

This incident is illustrative of the employer–employee camaraderie at R.K. Studios. The old adage may be that 'No man is a hero to his valet', but at R.K. Studios, Raj was always the lovable hero first, a friend later and boss last. No wonder his team of technicians and artistes stood by him through thick and thin. Lyricist Shailendra related an incident which throws light on this aspect of Raj Kapoor's character. It was raining hard one day and Shailendra took Raj Kapoor to his little hutment. The roof was leaking badly. 'Now you know how we people live,' Shailendra said.

Raj was quiet for a long while, then whispered: 'It is in rooms like these that the real India lives. I will do something about it.'

On being asked how he directed his own son (Rishi Kapoor) in his film Bobby, *Raj Kapoor replied:* As a director I explain the situation and what I expect from him. It's up to him to emote the right way. That is where acting talent comes in...Whoever is acting or directing, the film is always the director's baby. After all, he has a conception of the movie in its totality. Take the phrase 'I love you'. You can say it in three different ways: by stressing any of the three different words. Only the director will know what word he wants stressed. He is like the conductor of a hundred-piece orchestra, aware of the strains and stresses. Even if the individual musicians are brilliant, they have to play under the conductor's baton. I have acted in several films directed by others and have been both blamed and praised for having sunk my individuality and become only an actor following directions. (But) I do believe that cinema is the film-maker's art. Of course, there is music, layout, costume, editing and various things that go into it. But the director is definitely the coordinator who presents a whole film as a work of art.

My film is Ganga (*the heroine of* Ram Teri Ganga Maili *is named after the river Ganga*), my thought is Ganga, so how could I envisage going somewhere else to depict the Ganga just because it is easily accessible? It would not be just cinematic jugglig but playing with the faith of millions.

At work Raj Kapoor was exacting, even at the risk of his life. In spite of acute breathing problems, aggravated by high altitudes, he was determined to film the Ganga at its source, Gangotri, in the high Himalayas. To shoot at the ice cave of Gaumukh, above the Gangotri glacier at an altitude of 4100 metres, Raj Kapoor had to be carried by doli-walas *(mountain palanquin bearers).*

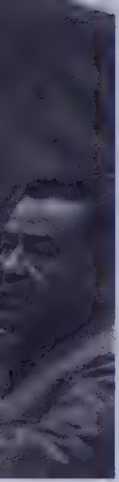
With son Rajiv at the shooting for Ram Teri Ganga Maili.

Even in his early years, Raj Kapoor went to great lengths to achieve the authentic look. To get the cloud patterns right in the last scene of Shree 420, *where the tramp walks into the sunset, he set out with his unit for Khandala. But nothing was quite right, and the unit carried on, past Khandala and beyond, till they reached Ooty, several hundred kilometres away, with the unit members in their summer clothing shivering in the cold. The shooting that began as a two-hour trip ended after three days.*

We began our work in an age of optimism. The republic was new, the rulers were new to leadership. My cinema was born in an age of idealism. That is why the songs in my films have a pristine quality about them, the women have a freshly-washed, innocent look. It is strange, but even in complex times such as the present, idealism still seems to work.

But today anyone and everyone can become a producer or a director, without any qualifications. In the good old days, we had to graduate step by step. Today, my driver can become a producer, just by virtue of his being my driver! I am not against people becoming producers, this is a free country and everyone has the right to choose his or her profession, but the ground rules must be established. Or we are all stuck in a quicksand, sinking slowly but surely.

With Padmini Kolhapure in Holland for the shooting of Prem Rog.



Will R.K. Studios survive after I am gone? From my viewpoint, I think it should. Daboo is a good administrator, Chintoo is only starting out, but my intuition tells me he will be a good director, and Chimpu (Rajiv) will also be a director and a very good one at that. The fate of R.K. Films rests with these three sons of mine.

The most difficult performance for an actor is when he is asked to react to a dialogue or situation without speaking. At this time he has to convey everything through his expressions only, and for this it is necessary for his eyes to speak. As a director, you will be sometimes faced with a situation, especially when shooting a dramatic scene, where the silent reaction you require from the actor is not coming across. The way to get over this situation is: shoot a very big close-up of the actor. When your audience watches the film, the sheer magnitude of the shot will be so overpowering that the audience will get swayed by it...

The film medium will always be the limitless and dynamic medium for the creative artist who wishes to use it, provided always that he can solve the economic problems involved. The equation of film as 'industry' and film as 'art' remains to be solved by each user. Ultimately it depends on the sincerity of the film-maker. Every one spends money, but the only thing that comes out clearly in the end is the sincerity of the film-maker himself. The magic is not in the techniques a film-maker uses but in his own vision and the 'filmic expression', which has no man-made restrictions to hinder its shape and size.

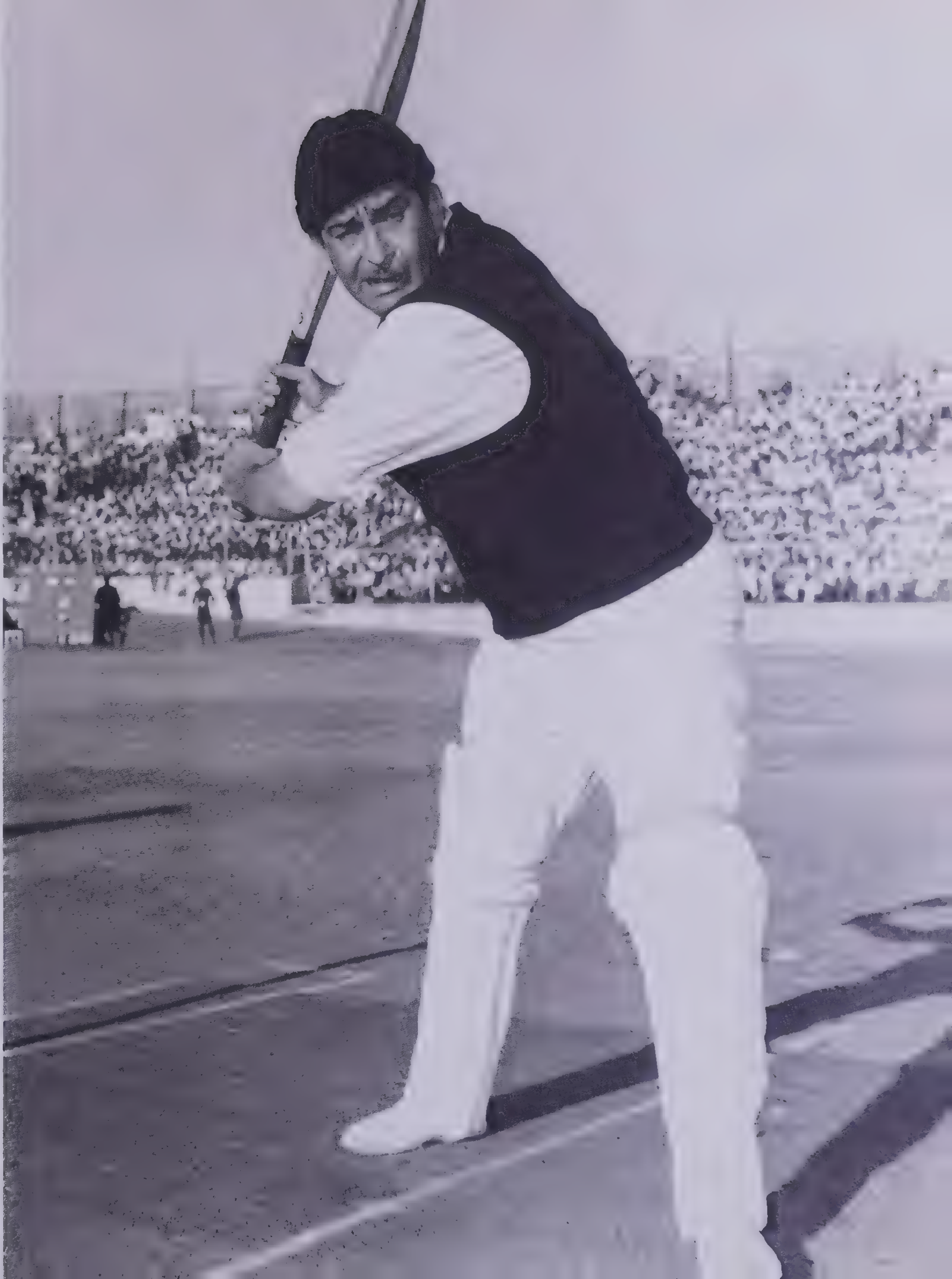
But Raj Kapoor was no traditionalist, unwilling to experiment. 'Show business of the future is in special attractions,' he believed. 'The strange, the unusual, the unique...Too many people are thinking in conventions which are dead.' While shooting Barsaat, *for instance, Raj Kapoor was so overwhelmed by the photography of Greg Toland in Orson Welles'* Citizen Kane *that he ordered his cameraman V.N. Reddy, who had photographed his earlier film* Aag, *to use the wide angle lens extensively. Reddy, an orthodox cameraman, was appalled by the idea of pillars and columns getting shortened, and refused. Finally, Jal Mistry had to be assigned the task of photographing Barsaat.*

Animals can only give love, they have no demands. Dogs are more human. What a pity they can't speak!

RELAXATIONS

It is tradition to play cards during the festival of Diwali, but my films are my biggest gamble!

Raj Kapoor was young at heart, and remained so till his last days. His passion for cinema was matched only by his enthusiasm for a game of cricket. In his younger days, he would lead film-star teams in fund raising matches for charitable causes. He would open the bowling - not always with great success, but then, it was the spirit of the game and the entertainment it provided for the audience that was important to him.



Raj Kapoor loved farming. 'Raj Bagh (his hundred-acre farm in Pune) is the place I will retire to one day,' he often said.

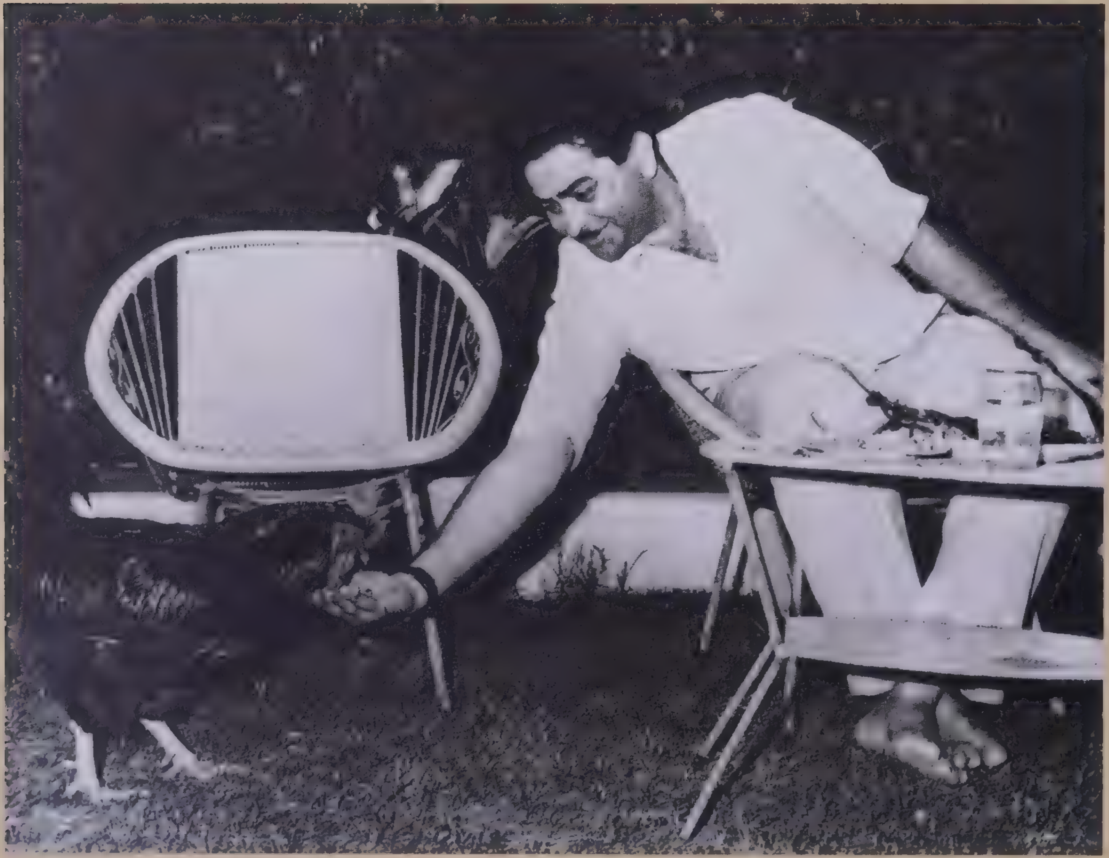
'There is a curious resemblance between films and farming. A film-man's ideas are like the farmer's seeds. There is a right time to sow them. Then they germinate. The film-maker has his obstacles, just as the farmer has to watch the skies and a hundred other things. When your film pays you, it pays you bountifully. And so does the earth if it is in a beneficent mood.'

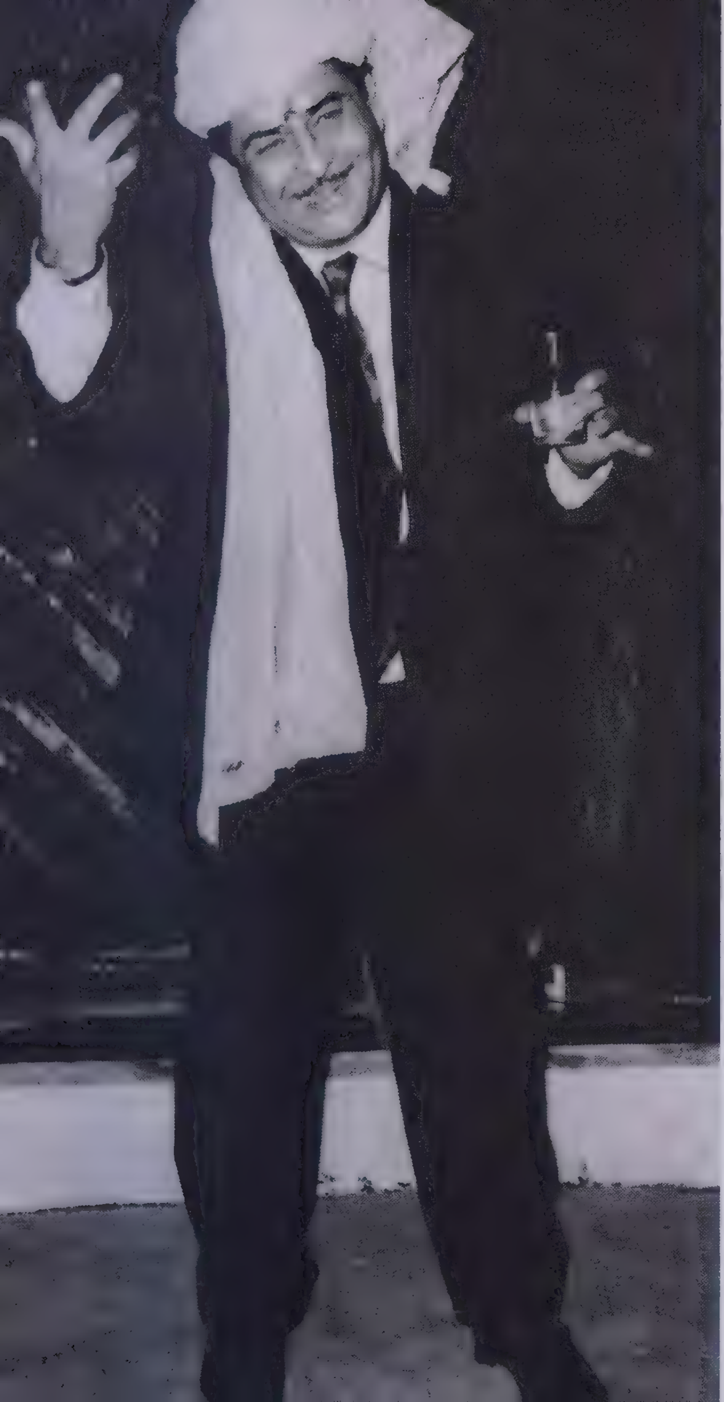
सत्यम
शिवम
सुन्द
LOV
BY RAJ KAP

R.K. Studios is an institution which has its own cultural traditions. Everyone in the film industry wants to come here to celebrate the festival of Holi. People used to take pride in coming here. The numbers have reduced because people do not have the time or the sentiment that they had earlier. Holi will be celebrated this year (1970) also. Colours will fly, drums will be beaten, only a few faces will change.

Raj Kapoor's R.K. Studios in Chembur witnessed the gayest, most colourful Holi celebrations in Bombay. Colours ran wild among the celebrities and in the ducking pond.

Keeping fowls was one of Raj Kapoor's hobbies, and part of his daily routine was to feed them, calling out 'Aa, aa, aa!' He often used the same tone, jokingly, to call his grandchildren. He would give names to each one of his fowls. Even after he died, one of his hens continued for quite some time to come and lay eggs on his bed!





Cooking was Raj Kapoor's favourite way to relax. He often quoted a Punjabi saying, Khao dal jedi nibhe naal, *which implied that one could eat the fanciest food in the world, but at the end of the day, a simple, well-cooked daal was the best fare.*

* * *

I am not an alcoholic, I am a drunkard! Some of my best thoughts have occurred to me while I was drinking...It is a blessed thing, a drink.

What is it, after all, that a man wants? Money, position and success - all are secondary. The basic thing is tomorrow: the knowledge and promise that tomorrow will be better than today. Nothing else matters.

REFLECTIONS

Right from my first film I have played deglamourized roles, I have never tried to be the handsome blue-eyed lover…That was how I felt best, and that gradually led me to the 'little man'. Spiritually I felt very happy with that, more so in a country like India. There are, even now, millions and millions of 'little men'… on footpaths, in huts, everywhere.

* * *

Cinema is cinema! Psychologically, cinema alone has involvement. How long can you watch the tube? Television at home is just you and your family. But when you go to the cinema, you have a lot of people all around you, and you come to a common level of application. You denounce the action or revel in it, but it is a common feeling among you. You enjoy it, you laugh, you clap, and the whole hall is laughing. When you feel wronged and cheated, the whole hall feels cheated. Now that is a very different kind of feeling. That is why the Americans, the biggest film-makers at one time, have never had a golden period in show business like they have had of late, despite the fact that they have thirty TV channels there.

What really hurts me is to see people, many of whom profess to be my friends, trying to deceive me, smugly thinking that they can get away with it. Of course they do, because I allow them to. I pretend not to understand, when actually I keep track of everything!

* * *

Certain films used to leave a profound mark on my life, like certain relationships did. And certain film-makers nearly changed my art, like Frank Capra. In all my films it is the common man, the underdog, who ultimately manages to get the best deal from life. I have always shared the optimism of Capra's *It Happened One Night.*

It seemed as though my own shadow was watching me, seeing everything in terms of shots, with all the wipes, dissolves, fade-ins, cuts - everything telescoped into a mass of unedited celluloid scripts, caught by the camera's unblinking eye, in the tireless gaze of life's arc lamps...

Today each (associate) has gone his separate way after his own personal mirage...and I find myself standing again, as it were, on the threshold of a fresh phase of my life.

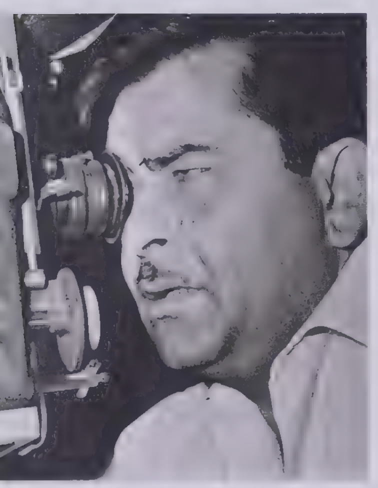
I have at times worked seventy-two hours non-stop. There is something within you that is the energy, power, vitality. You have to do it, so...you do it. At other times I have lazed, just slept like a pumpkin or a bum...

I am a man of few diversions. Work, work and more work - that has always been my life. When I am not at work on a film, I am brooding over my work in that film. That is why occasions such as the celebration of a birthday afford me a rare break from the steadfastness of my dedication to work. It recharges me, makes me whole and new again.

There is a party on the lawns of my residence at night. People come - colleagues from the industry, friends from within and outside the industry. It acts as my contact with the outside world again. I see fun and laughter. I listen to the stories they tell. I am happy to see all of them happy.

And the morning after...yet another birthday has passed. I am embarking now on my own New Year. It is a time for the reaffirmation of my faith - reaffirmation of my faith in my work, that is of prime importance. Reaffirmation of my faith also in the people, the great Indian people, whom it is our life's mission to entertain, to make happy and, if possible, also in the process to enlighten.

No matter whose film it is, it complements and supplements the rest of the filmmakers of the film industry. Whether it is mine or it is Subhash Ghai's or whether it was, in the past, Mr Shantaram's or Mr Mehboob's - economically, each great and successful film in some way helped every producer and everybody in the film industry.



Today when we face great competition from numerous gadgets and forms of media that have cropped up, it really goes to the credit of the very generous, the very kind and gracious, appreciating audience of this country which has made it possible for *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* to celebrate it's golden jubilee! I thank all my technicians, my colleagues - may they also celebrate such jubilees and may we congregate again to wish one another in the trade happy going despite all the televisions, and all the video cassettes and all the pilfering and pirating...Cinema will always exist.

* * *

There is nothing in this world except love. The more you spread it or give it, the more it expands. The more you accept love, the stronger it becomes. The more you bring out love, the better and greater you become. There are many forms of love. If you make it narrow, then it becomes selfish. Selfish love can benefit a person but he loses his significance.

I am an incurable romantic. I am in love with the concept of love. It is part of my personality. It's my individuality. That is why I make films about intense love. Films like *Prem Rog*. You see, very few people are fortunate enough to get genuine love. And even more rarely does the love acquire true intensity (and) become a '*rog*' (malady). When it does, it is incurable. That's when the lover cannot differentiate between God and his beloved.

I can't help it if everything about me is described in terms of romance. The feeling I try to project on screen is genuine - always pure and straight from the heart. I want my audience not only to see romance visually, but to feel it - the visual must be very beautiful. The girl must be beautiful. The boy must be beautiful. Beauty is the soul of every frame. The audience must love the girl and the boy. If it does not, it won't feel for them. I am not concerned with the kind of love that wallows in its own grief. I tried that once in *Aah* and failed miserably. I am concerned with love that is beautiful. Sublime. Yes, sometimes it is just out of reach. But that is what makes it interesting. That is where the suspense comes in. Will he get her? Won't he get her? Of course, he has to get her,

my audience can't go back disappointed. My credo is that to achieve (success) in love is very important. I don't believe that 'it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all'. Why lose? There is something wrong somewhere if you are to lose.

You can't separate Raj Kapoor the director and actor from Raj Kapoor the man...the man is important. As a man, to me, love (has always been) a very special emotion. I don't mean love as it is understood in a relationship between man and woman...There is another kind of love which comes to a lucky few, once in a lifetime, like a glorious spectrum, a vast area of belonging. You know why I am so pre-occupied with love? It is because I've had a lot of it since childhood. I was loved by my mother, my teachers and friends. I seem to have had more than my share of it because of my fair skin and blue eyes!

I was loved and I loved in return. I loved people, things, places, flowers, hills, everything around me. I think love is a great unifying force in creativity. Even in the world of business, love can do wonders. You can't negotiate with hate, can you? Today, I look around and see our contemporary films in which the predominant emotions are anger, hate, violence, vengeance and bitterness. My films have always dealt with love and all that surrounds it. In the evolution of love, there is revolution.

People write diaries, I write screenplays. My life is like a script - every incident, each stray remark, flash of colour, sound and footfall is branded on the memory of (all my) yesterdays.

* * *

Before anybody can have confidence in you, you need to have it within yourself. Respect yourself, no matter what you do, and you must enjoy whatever work you do, small or large. Always work towards what you believe in, and the day you start converting your beliefs into passions is the day you will start fulfilling your dreams.

* * *

I make a film to please me first. If it pleases me, I feel there is a good chance it will please others. But it has to please me first.

* * *

The films we all are making today! I am particularly talking about the so-called popular cinema. When we made films, our films were also popular, they were very popular, not only in our country but all over the world. But with those films you also said a lot. You had something to show, something to tell the world...We had directions from our leaders, from thinkers, poets, writers, and that inspired many of us to make such films. Through these films we portrayed India: this is our culture, this is our music, and this is our struggle and this is what we want to achieve. Unfortunately, a conscientious film-maker today stands at a crossroads, not knowing which path to take. There is no positive direction. There are so many pitfalls. And that is the reason why most of us are making escapist fare...(or just) imitating. It is not taking us anywhere. (But) I know the time will come again, and shortly...I may not be there to make it, but positively there are going to be people who will make that cinema which will reach and touch millions in our country and all over the world.

* * *

Our people are gracious and kind. They go to all the trouble to go to a cinema, stand in long queues and procure a ticket. They go through the hustle and bustle, through the blazing sun and the thrashing rain, to see your film, and - as I have always said - if you do not cheat the audience, they are very kind to you. Don't make fools of them. Do not take them for granted. They may not be as intelligent or as critical as other audiences, but they know why they have come there (to the theatre), they know: they want to be entertained.

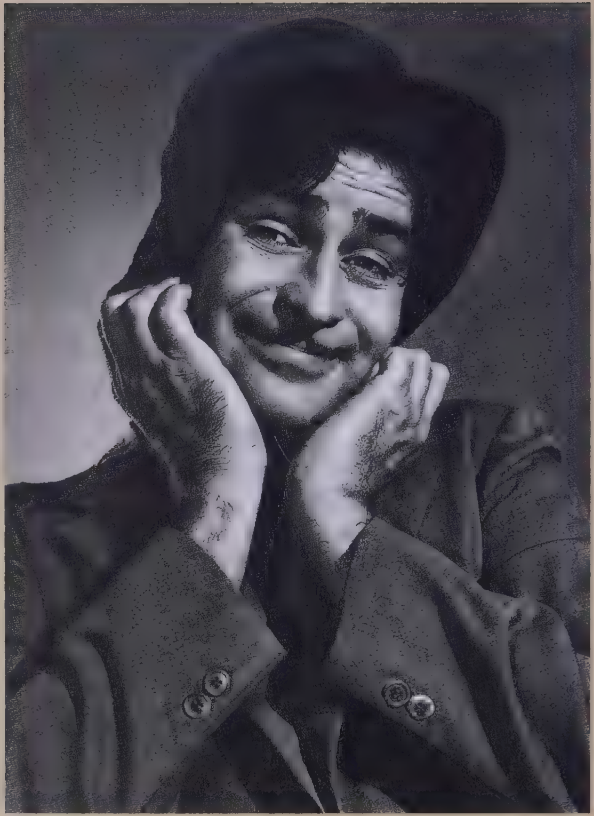
* * *

Films are my life, my benediction, the very breath of my soul. Over the years I have grown to realize that I could not have known this beautiful world as I have done if I hadn't been making films. I realize that my whole existence is nothing but what little I know through cinema, through people. Human beings...relationships... pain... sorrow... joy... happiness... so many things, all through cinema. My films and I! To me it is the same as saying, my beloved and I, or my life's breath and I, or my purpose and I. To me my films are all these rolled into one... perhaps more!

* * *

Making a film is like selling a dream. The man in the audience sees the hero beating up twenty people and he jumps with joy. He identifies with the hero and finds an outlet for his own pent up frustrations. He buys their dream. I sell dreams too...(but) I sell visions of love sublime. This is the basic difference. Theirs is a cinema of hatred, mine is a cinema of love.

Look at yourself in the mirror and see if you love the image that you see. If you love yourself then the world will love you. There is a saying that human beings come into this world and go out of it naked. As for me, I even live in it naked. I have nothing to hide, everything to reveal.

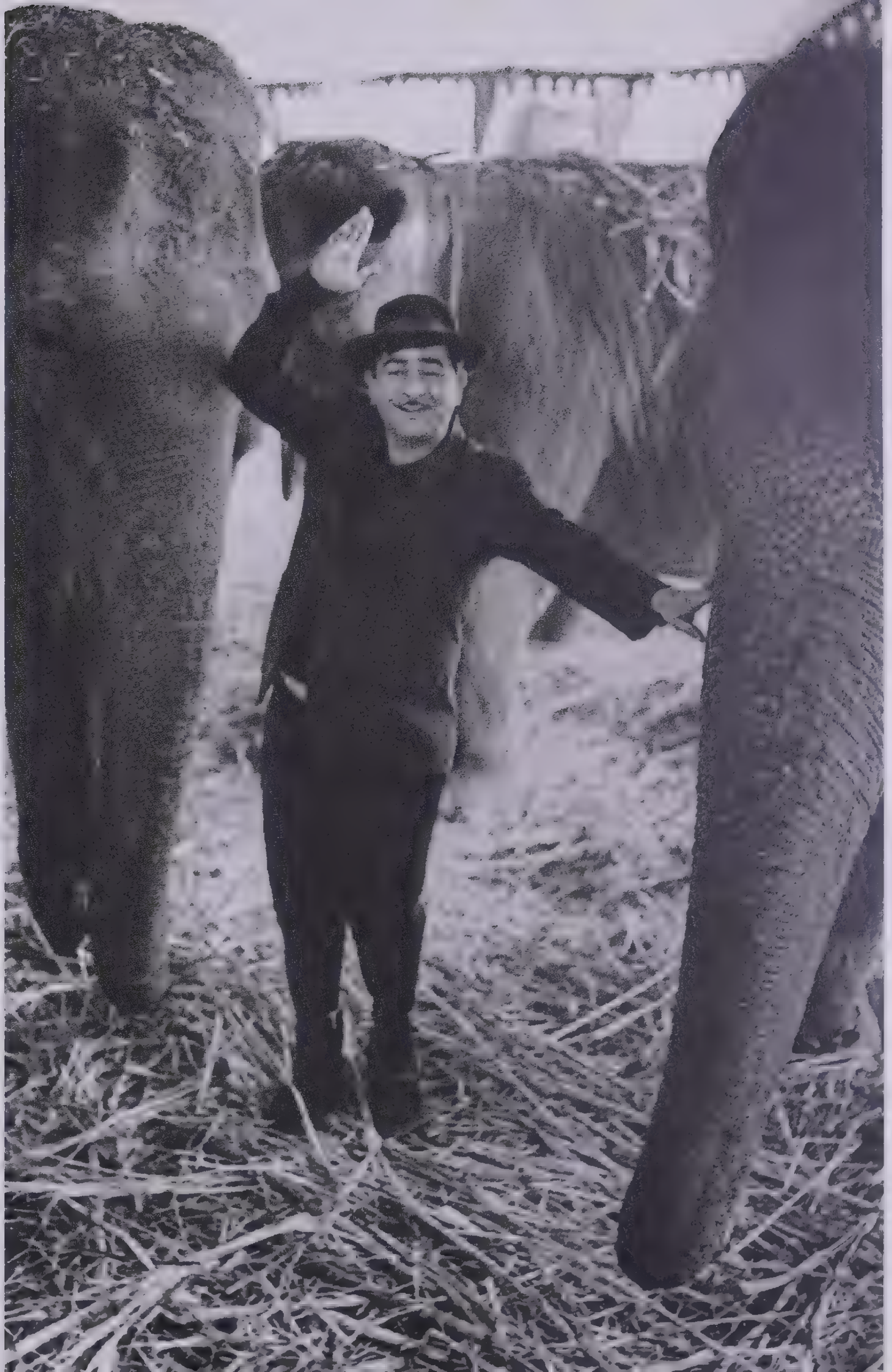


I am not a Hindu because I was born into a Hindu family. I have inherited a great philosophy and I am part of that universal consciousness which is called Hinduism. (But) I have a universe of my own, I am in complete control of it and several worlds exist in my own universe. I am an eternal joker and making human beings laugh is my religion.

I am the traveller who comes but once. I dance and sing to fill your hearts with joy and then...I go away, knowing that you have had a hearty laugh...

Laughter is the best medicine. Laugh, and the world laughs with you, weep, and you weep alone…

As a child it was my ambition to follow in the footsteps of my father and entertain people. There is nothing nobler in life than to entertain people.



At an Independence Day celebration in the mid-eighties, a time when there was unrest in Punjab, Raj Kapoor spoke of the need for unity and the role of Hindi cinema in this context:

I am no politician. I am an artiste. I belong to a country where people are sentimental, emotional about their basic strength, which is their faith. It is ingrained within us. It is unfortunate that this observation, for whatever it is worth, should be clubbed with a kind of celebration that has nothing to do with it. What we have come here to celebrate is the independence of this country.

I think that the greatest force behind this independence was and is the participation of the Sikh race... This martial race from Punjab fought for and sacrificed people to gain independence. So it is painful to hear that the day you should (remember) the sacrifice of brothers, sisters, sons, you make it a political issue and use this as a forum to voice your grievances. I don't think that this should be done. This day is when we put aside our grievances and just remember one thing - what our forefathers did, how they behaved with the one vital force that was 'unity'.

We know that our country is very diverse. So many religions...so many castes, breeds, provinces, languages. Yet we are one. We have been one. There is no reason for any force to cut through, to disintegrate a fast country and a people who have been one. That unity has been our (true) spirituality...and we use this platform to divide? It is very unfortunate if a thing like this happens. But I am sure it will not, because 15 August, which we shall celebrate, is a day when you shed all your grievances and shout with one voice that we are Indians. We will celebrate our independence together, each one of

us, no matter if he is a Punjabi, or he is a Sikh or a Muslim or a Hindu or a Parsi, a South Indian or a North Indian. I am sure my brothers and sisters of the great Khalsa tradition will understand this fact and not try to disrupt this great national day that is being celebrated...

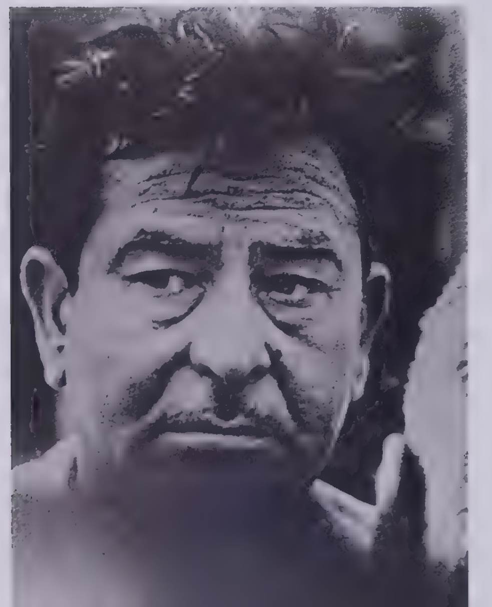
We, in this part of the world, have been manufacturing entertainment for millions...I am also one amongst the many who have contributed to bringing together a lot of people in this country at one beautiful, integrated solidarity-level of humanism, belonging, and understanding...There is communalism and now there is so-called terrorism - everyone claiming his land. What land? Whose is it? Ours! There is so much that we can do by making entertaining films, with these issues as the background. We can reach millions of people who today are ignorant about these things, and create a consciousness and awareness.

This is what we try to achieve. How far have we been successful? I can only say that in a diverse country like India...cinema has been one very vital force in bringing the east, west, south and north together, to help them know something about one another, and I hope this has been a great contribution.

* * *

Most of my life's passions, my fondest hopes have gone into my work and at the end of each film the result invariably is that I feel lonely.

Thank God I have not studied too much. Thank God I am not bookish, thank God I am not literate, thank God I am a fool or a buffoon. I am just simple and down to earth so that I can identify and feel for the other one. I can smile with him; I can share his pain and I can share his joy - both - sitting on the footpath.



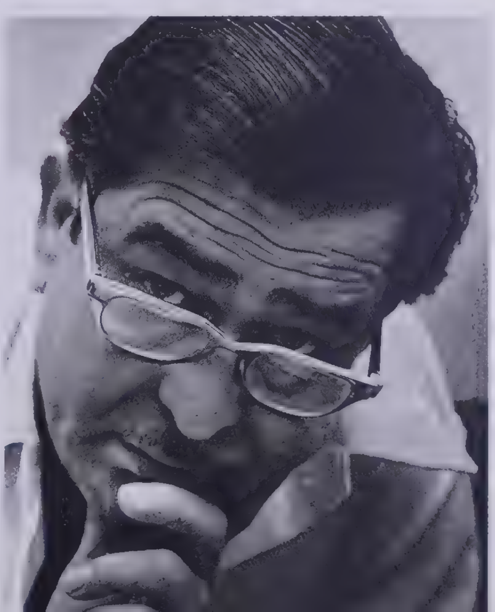
This sensitivity born within me has led me to beautiful human beings...The beautiful things I saw in them, I accepted, and the ugly things I just discarded. In youth, this romanticism and sensitivity both go together. If you want to love, you must be sensitive. You cannot be in love if you are insensitive.

* * *

Many people have asked why I have music, soap operas, a hodge-podge of everything (in my films). To whom am I catering? I am not making films for drawing-room conversation. I am making films to entertain the millions of this country. So I have my music, I have romanticism, a beautiful script, dancing, nice visuals - and there we are! All is well and everybody is happy and God is great! Cinema is the only medium which reaches millions of people at the same time, and that is the reason why I try and make films which millions can see. You may call it popular cinema, call it any kind of cinema, but as long as it reaches millions of people in my country, and if I can give them something to think about...to sing about, to laugh about, I think I have done my job.

* * *

Why is it so painful to understand one's own self? There have been great people who have tried to - Lord Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Lord Krishna, Lord Ram...They were kind people, who from their own pain had come out to identify themselves with the suffering people in this world, giving them happiness, trying to soothe them, trying to tell them anything that can be good for them, bring them a moment of happiness. I think what they probably realized is that everybody is pained. So we have to cure this, just as we have to when there is disease. How do we cure disease? There is a diagnosis, there is medicine...which soothes. What is there that one shall apply to pain? There is love; there is affection, there is kindness.



Lack of funds is a curse in the film industry but excess of funds is a greater curse. People tend to make more films and creativity is destroyed.

* * *

The artistic fire that was ignited years ago is still burning within me, rather it burns fiercer and brighter...I am basically an entertainer and a showman. I give the dressed-up version of a message to my public. I don't understand this new wave that has come into the industry. And I don't like the way some people use the word 'commercial' cinema...Cinema is a medium for the masses, not for drawing-room conversation.

What is entertainment? To one it may be a beautiful song or a dance, to another it might be the intellectual exercise of a play, a drama or something that gives him satisfaction; he identifies with the situation or with an actor. To some it might just be (a means) to vent his pent-up emotions: he sees a fight and he feels that as the hero he has knocked down about fifty people with one blow, he claps and shouts and yells and says: 'A lovely film... a lovely film'. That film might not have anything, but it gave him satisfaction, made him happy and made him forget about the daily problems that he confronts. For the brief moment he has forgotten everything else, he enjoys himself. Now, that is entertainment!

Contact with the people is the most precious prize in the life of the entertainer. It is a contact which is constantly renewed each time one makes a film...

A film is not made to sit and see within the four walls of your own home. It is made with a message for people and each time you make a film you must part with a precious portion of your being for the people. Nothing fake or counterfeit will do because nothing except your sincerity counts. The audience, which sits in a theatre to see your film, can feel it pulsating or missing. That is why I pour my heart and soul into each and every film I make.

A film-maker is like a conductor at a concert. He doesn't compose the tune and he doesn't play the instruments. Yet, when he comes, the musicians stand up. A true film-maker should be respected as much as a great literary writer, because he has the power to influence the thinking of the people along the right lines. He should be respected as a nation builder as much as a great politician and a statesman is.

When I look around today, I see so much corruption. You feel that people are becoming more and more crude and vulgar. They seem to have no values. The basic strengths, truthfulness, loyalty, what we considered the gems of humanity, don't exist at all. Basically there is something wrong with the whole system. I don't profess to be a moralist or a reformist. I am not a preacher or a philosopher or an intellectual. I am just a man saying what I feel.

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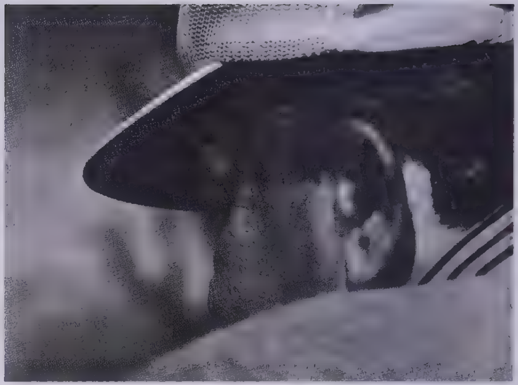
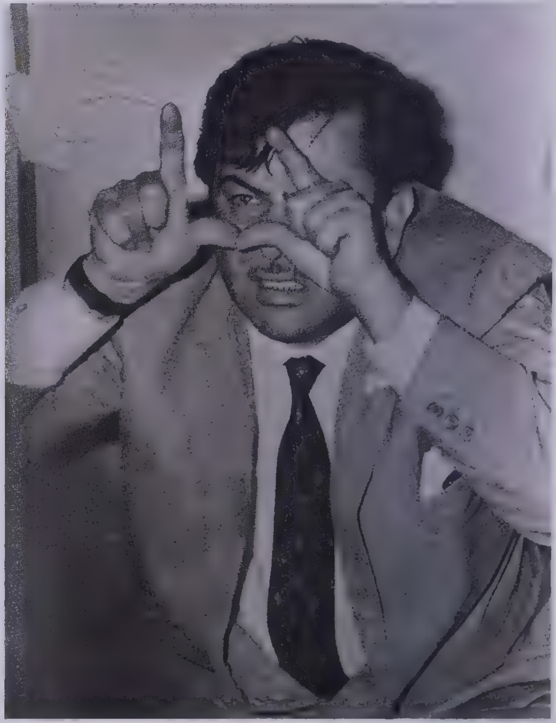
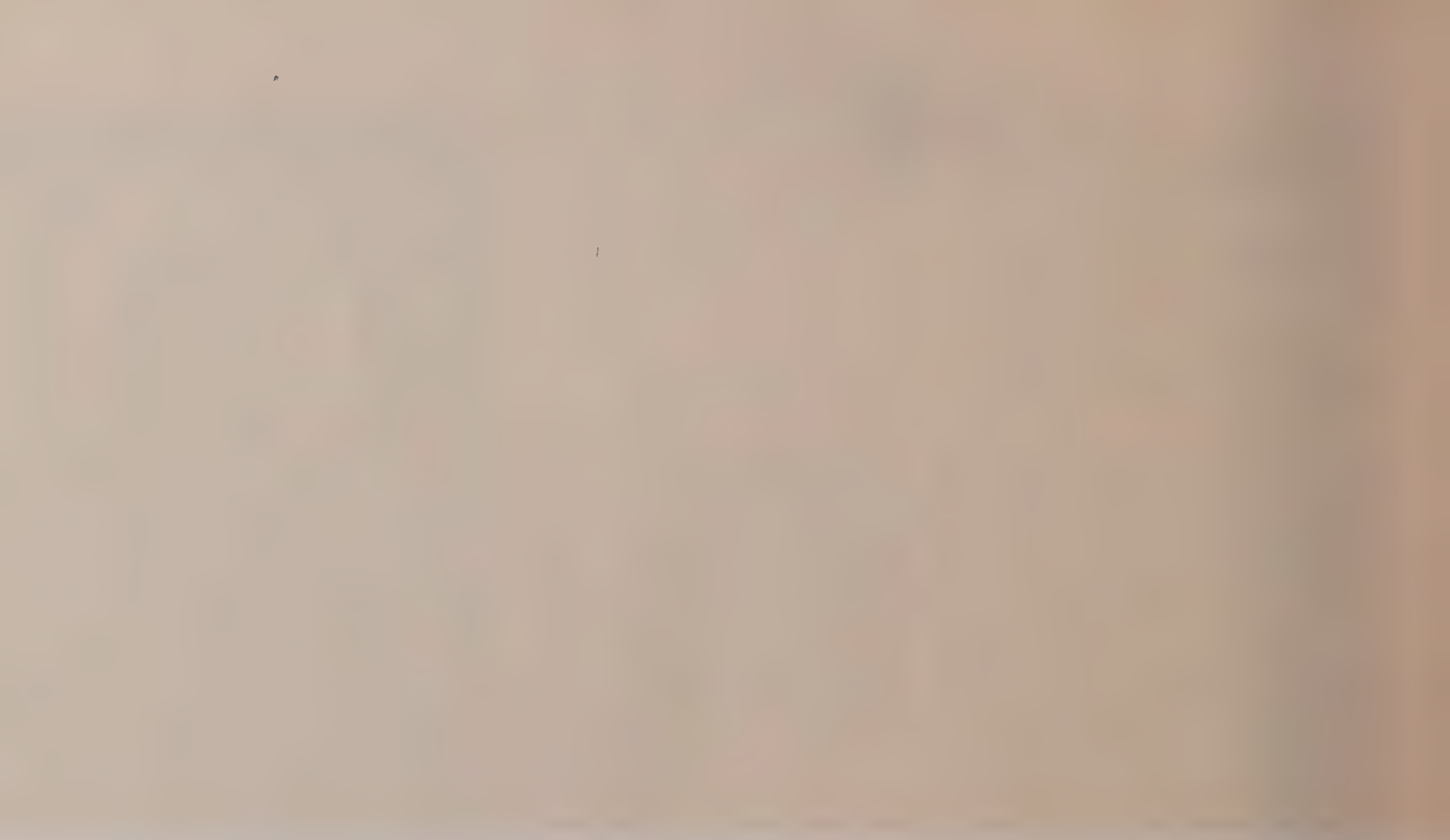




Hindu philosophy defines very well the stages of life: *Bachpan* (childhood), *Brahmacharya* (youth), *Grahastha* (household), *Vanaprastha* (detachment) and then *Sanyas* (salvation). I am in my Vanaprastha stage, where nothing affects me. I am detached from the worldly way of life. I have been able to do what I believe in. I am still doing what I believe in, and I feel that I have come nearer to where I wanted - to the people, to dwell in their hearts. I want to achieve that.

Some years ago, when I was shooting for some film, an American journalist came to interview me. The interview turned into a discussion on religious philosophy and 'the philosophy of the Joker'. Then I said, the world's greatest men were jokers. Christ was a great joker. So were Buddha and Gandhi. The journalist looked totally bewildered. So I explained. Of course Christ was a joker. When someone slapped him on one cheek, he offered the other. People laughed at him, not realizing how much of deep truth lay beneath what he said and what he did. You see, he was so much ahead not only of his times but of the people he attempted to show light to. In his own time he was laughed at, just like Buddha and Gandhi were derided, but the world that came to scoff stayed on to revere. These men had hearts large enough to hold all the world's love, all the world's suffering, all the world's agony and pain and loneliness and sacrifice. And that is the character of the joker. His heart is the crucible to transmute all the world's pain into the laughter on his face and the joke on his lips.

Beneath all the fun and frolic, beneath all the showmanship and spectacle, beneath all the jokes and laughter, all the breathtaking canvas of circus and magic, song and dance, music and miming, there lies the deep emotionalism and humanism of the eternal 'little man', the Christ in the garb of the Clown whose mission in life is to spread happiness and joy, laughter and peace, at his own expense. There lies the saga of the 'little man', the Joker who bore the cross of sorrow and misery on his shoulders and always preached the gospel of peace and love for the eternal benefit of mankind.



(*Awara*) was my little contribution to USSR-India friendship.

Raj Kapoor's Awara showing at a theatre in Moscow.

VISIT TO USSR

КИНО УДАРНИК ТЕАТР
ФЕСТИВАЛЬ ИНДИЙСКИХ КИНОФИЛЬМОВ
ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ ДРУЖБА НАРОДОВ ИНДИИ И СОВЕТСКОГО СОЮЗА!
भारत और सोवियत संघ की जनताओं की मैत्री की जय।
СЕГОДНЯ НА ЭКРАНЕ
ДВА БИГХА ЗЕМЛИ
Ураган

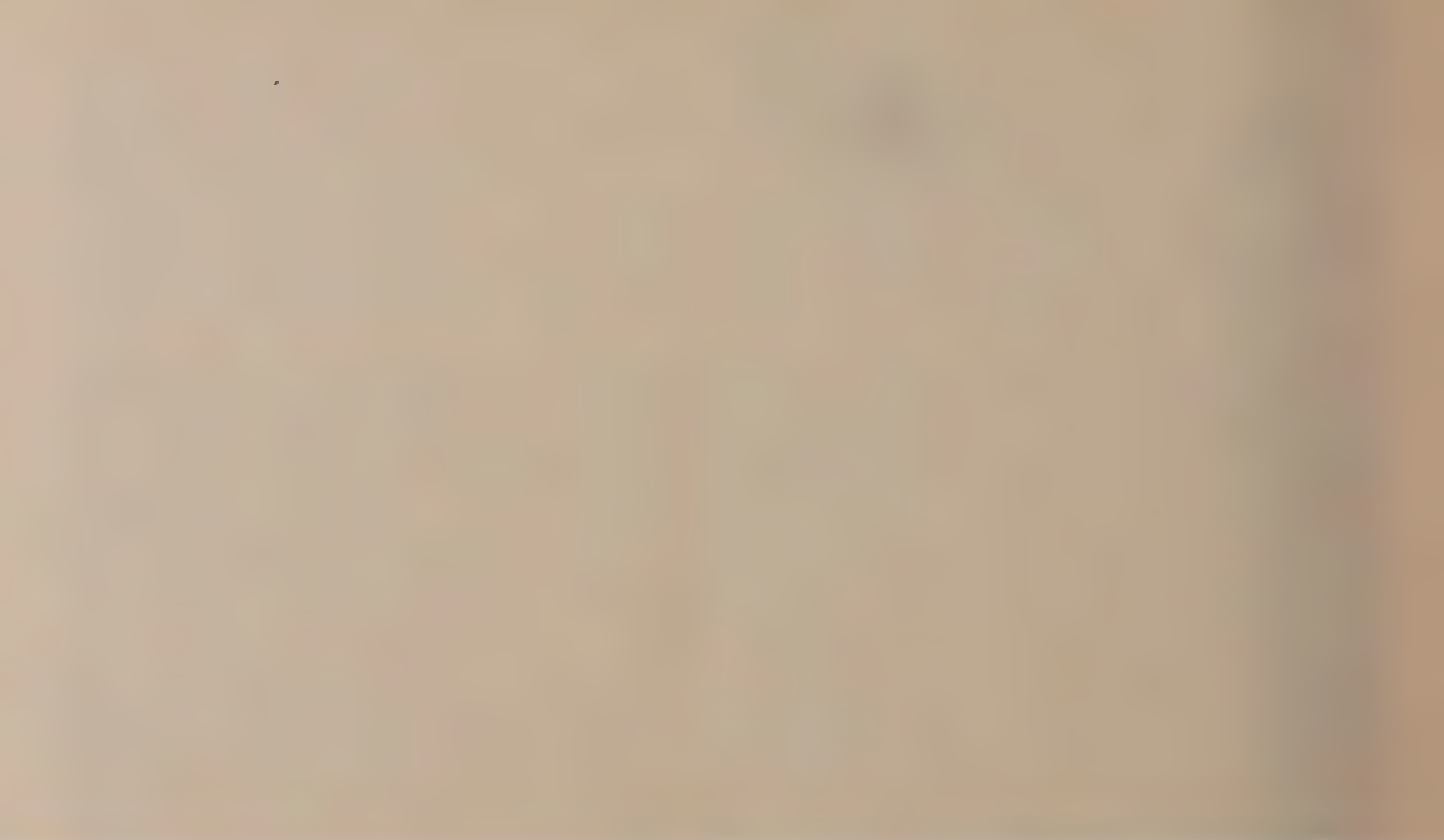
1954 was the first time I went beyond the so-called Iron Curtain, to the Soviet world. I was fortunate to have been invited - it was a revelation altogether. The Soviet Union had a large film industry, but more than that, what was staggering was the people: the welcome of millions of people, and their love. The people in the Soviet Union liked *Awara* tremendously and also liked my work. They gave me a lot of affection which I feel till today, twenty-eight years later! I am deeply honoured, but I do not take all the credit for myself. This love and affection that they have given to the vagabond ('*awara*') or to my work, was symbolically to the young spirit, to the youth of India at that time. That lovable '*awara*' was seeking and searching for love, affection and friendship. And whoever held out his hand to him, he took it. This was my little contribution to USSR-India friendship.

My popularity in Russia is a phenomenon I can't explain myself, except that my films *Awara* and *Shree 420* came at an opportune moment, when the Russian people were changing themselves culturally. In these films they saw the spirit of the Indian youth in revolt and they loved him, as he became the symbol of their own spirit. This identity with the Indian youth that I portrayed drew us closer; our friendship has been a long-standing one... even today I get a warm welcome from them.

Raj Kapoor and Nargis with Nikolay Cherkasov (actor) and Vsevolod Pudovkin (film Director) (1954).

In Moscow, the first words we heard were: 'Dear friends, comrades.' After hearing these simple but very important words, it is not necessary to study any more of the Russian language. We've always said that if we call somebody a friend, he is a friend for ever.

In my first experience of going abroad (as a film-maker), we learnt and gained a lot from the people that we met. We went right within, into the core of their hearts, and they opened up their doors to tell us what we wanted to know. I spoke little but I kept my ears and eyes open to anything and everything I could hear or see.

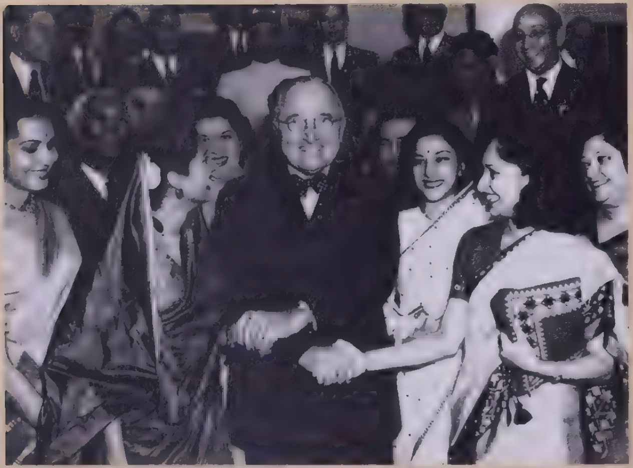


Raj Kapoor with American film director and writer Gabriel Pascal and his wife (1952)

VISIT TO USA

[illegible] of Screen Directors' Guild award [illegible]

[illegible] State Department [illegible] American in September 1952 [illegible] tour of the coun[illegible] Raj Kapoor [illegible] Truman [illegible] welcome to the [illegible] from India



At the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum as guests of the Association of Motion Picture Producers to witness a football game between Rice University of Texas and the University of California. The [illegible] over the public address system. [illegible] Nimmi, and Bimal Roy [illegible] USA [illegible] 1952.

CORPORATION

Above: *Presenting a gift from India to Jack L. Warner, Vice-President in charge of production, Warner Brothers. In turn, he received a key to the Warner Brothers Studios (1952).*

Right: *Among visitors being welcomed to the Columbia Studios by Ely Levy, Head of the International Department and member of the Association of Motion Picture Producers of America (1952).*

Conductor Zubin Mehta recalls how once in Los Angeles he had asked American star Danny Kaye, a great friend and a phenomenal cook, to prepare a meal for Raj Kapoor. Zubin had impressed on Raj Kapoor that Danny was a stickler for punctuality, but when he arrived to pick up the guests he found that they were not ready. 'Krishna has not seen the moon!' said Raj Kapoor to the horrified Zubin. He went on to explain: 'Today is a religious fast undertaken once a year by the wife in the husband's honour, and before she can break her fast, she must sight the moon.' They drove halfway to the Pacific Ocean when one of them providentially caught sight of the moon and pointed it out to Krishna. Then they raced off to Danny Kaye's house. Despite all Zubin's efforts, they were twenty-five minutes late. As was to be expected, the expression on Danny's face, when they entered, was not exactly one of welcome. As far as he was concerned, his pasta was ruined. It took Raj Kapoor only ten minutes to win Danny Kaye over completely, especially when the host saw how much his food was appreciated. They parted as dear friends, and there was not a time when Zubin Mehta met Danny Kaye and the latter did not ask about the great man from India.

Raj Kapoor and Nargis with American entertainer Danny Kaye (1952)

There is no comparison between the great Sir Charles Chaplin and Raj Kapoor. I am like a lamp in front of the sun. His was an art that will remain for ever, as long as human beings exist on this earth and flowers bloom. When I was very young I was an ardent fan of Charlie Chaplin. I had seen his *City Lights, Modern Times, Gold Rush* and *Limelight*. What inspired me in his work was the 'little man', and when I began my career, I saw the 'little man' all around in our country - the downtrodden, the man beaten for no fault of his.

What drew me to Chaplin's films was Chaplin himself - the hobo, the bum, the common man. I was not drawn to him so much because of his get-up, but because of the simplicity of the 'little man' and his human emotions. How he enjoyed life, even though he was so poor. There was so much of Chaplin that affected me - the thought process behind all his beliefs. I think his hobo was one of the greatest characters ever conceived

With Charlie Chaplin (1955)

With Frank Capra [illegible]

Addressing a mammoth crowd on the occasion of Independence Day in New York, Raj Kapoor said:

I am grateful to all of you for giving me an opportunity to celebrate the Independence of India on American soil, in New York, with Indians and the people of America - a day that we all as citizens, children of India, commemorate with great pride. We have given lives to gain this freedom and it is now our responsibility to preserve and strengthen it. India and its people only champion one thing, and that is peace...peace and friendship among nations and the people of the world. We are Indians and we are united despite all our diverse religions; every country has its problems. But on this day of Independence, there is happiness for all and we are one.

* * *

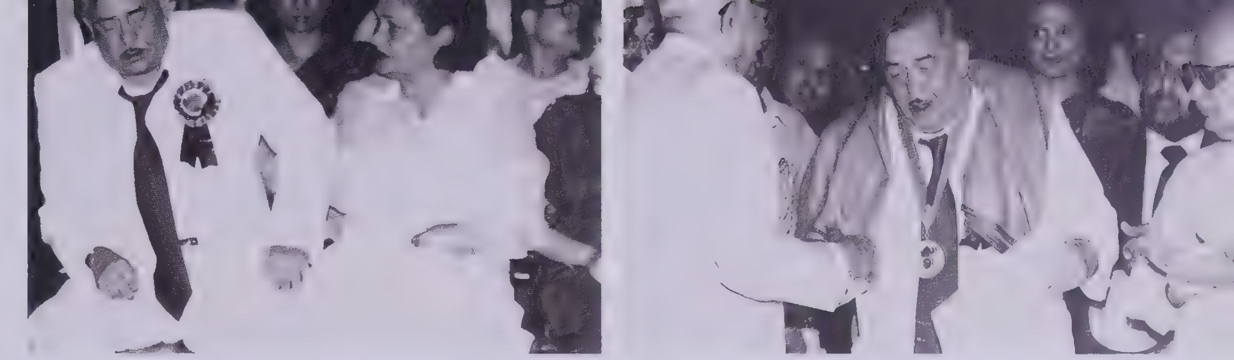
By Raj Kapoor's own admission, when he first visited America as a member of the Indian film delegation in 1952, he was totally unknown. Even when the world in our half of the globe was lionizing him and hailing him as a great film-maker by the time he had released Awara, *Americans neither knew nor apparently cared to know about him or his work. However, what was not destined to happen to Raj Kapoor in the fifties eventually did happen in the eighties. The National Film Development Corporation and the Directorate of Film Festivals, Delhi, in association with the UCLA in Los Angeles and the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), had a retrospective of Raj Kapoor's films in New York and Los Angeles in 1985. Both Geoffrey Gilmore, the Director of Programming at the UCLA film, audio, and television archives, and Adrienne Mancia, the Curator at the Department of Film at MOMA, who were knowledgeable about Indian cinema, were very keen to have Raj Kapoor as their guest of honour at the inauguration of the Festival of India at New York. They had got Raj Kapoor to agree to come, and when because of frequently recurring ill health, he sent them a cable calling off his trip, Adrienne Mancia shot back a cable to R.K. Studios demanding: 'Who can replace Raj Kapoor? It has to be Raj Kapoor or no one!' This not only amused Raj Kapoor but also gratified him considerably, and he made the trip to the USA.*

Perhaps, when you come to a point in time where you know that you are now a legend... it is time to go.

LAST DAYS

I feel that I am withering away. I cannot breathe with this asthma. This is not my style of living. Of all the diseases available to man, I had to pick up asthma. I suppose the essence of life is breath; you can sing songs, you can dance, you can create, you can live. You don't smoke, you don't drink, you don't eat as much as you used to, okay! But even then at times you are helpless. Anyway, I can't help making films and I can't help being breathless. *Saans aata nahin, ab mein kehta hoon ke saans jata kyon nahin!* (I cannot breathe properly, so why does not my breath leave me altogether!)

I am full of so many regrets, because I don't think I have reached anywhere near what I wanted to be... Lord, don't take me away when I have just started to play. When time, life, teaches you that you are closer to accepting what the One above has granted you, given you in abundance to do, to achieve, you feel that it is getting late, there is little time. There is very little time left.



Receiving the Dada Saheb Phalke Award from the President of India, R. Venkataraman (1988).

On receiving the Dada Saheb Phalke award, Raj Kapoor said:

I had no words to express my joy when I heard that I was given this honour. I thank everybody, all of you. I am happy for two reasons. Firstly, because my father had received the Dada Saheb Phalke award, although posthumously, and I had the privilege and the honour of receiving the award on his behalf. Little did I know that one day destiny would hand it over to me. And secondly, this reminds me how meaningful words like companions, comrades, teams, my unit, my thinkers, musicians, technicians, artists, all of them are. It is...not just me, but all of (the others) too who have made it possible for me to get this honour on their behalf, those who are not with me any more and also those who are with me. I am sure that at this particular moment they are listening. I am grateful to all of you.

On 2 May 1998, the occasion of the thirty-fifth National Film Festival award presentation ceremony at the Siri Fort auditorium in New Delhi, Raj Kapoor got the Dada Saheb Phalke award for his outstanding contribution to cinema. The award, named after India's first film-maker, who learnt the art of film-making from the inventor of the cine camera himself, is the most prestigious national award of the Indian film industry.

Raj Kapoor was unable to walk to the stage, having suddenly suffered an asthma attack. In a tribute to the artiste, the President of India, R. Venkataraman, set aside protocol and stepped down from the podium to present the prestigious award to the ailing Raj Kapoor, seated in the front row among the audience. This was the last time that Raj Kapoor ever stood up on his feet. The curtain came down on the showman's life amidst cheers and applause, just as he had envisaged the end of the second part of Mera Naam Joker - a screenplay that was written but never made into a film.

Although a sense of deep personal loss engulfed the Kapoor family, there was an unexpressed feeling that the showman could not have asked for a better finale. Death lost its sting and Raj Kapoor, as always, stole the show.

The doyen of Indian cinema passed away on 2 June 1988 in New Delhi. The end came at 9.20 p.m. He was sixty-four. He died of multiple organ failure leading to cardio-respiratory arrest.

The ailing thespian had been battling for his life since 2 May. Despite the best efforts of doctors, his condition kept deteriorating, and he slipped into a coma on 27 May.

Since his admission to the hospital, he was on the respirator. His cardiovascular functions, which were kept stable through drugs, also deteriorated. He had to be put on dialysis, because his kidneys stopped functioning. His family was at his bedside when the end came. The Government of India arranged to send the mortal remains of this great man to Bombay by a special chartered flight.

It was a day of mourning for the entire film industry, as Raj Kapoor was taken on his last journey, from his residence to the cremation grounds via R.K. Studios.

Kal khel mein, hum hon na hon, gardish mein tare rahenge sada... bhuloge tum, bhulenge woh, par hum tumhare rahenge sada. (Tomorrow, I may not be part of the (cosmic) game, but the stars will live on forever... You might forget me, and so might they, but I will be yours forever.)

Raj Kapoor's mortal remains were consigned to the flames according to Hindu rites on Friday, 3 June 1988, ending a glorious chapter of Indian cinema. The Phenomenon of the Indian screen was cremated at the Chembur crematorium amidst the chanting of Vedic hymns. The pyre was lit by his eldest son, Randhir Kapoor.

Whenever I die, take me to my studio - for it is possible that amidst the glitter of all the lights I may get up again and shout 'Action! Action!...'

Everything is here, in this world and in this lifetime. All good, all evil...all happiness, all misery...everything. There is nothing else after death. It is all one big zero. You live and you die. And there the matter ends.

Rishi Kapoor and Zeba Bakhtiar in Henna*, the film Raj Kapoor was working on when he died, and which was completed by his sons in 1990.*

THE SHOW GOES ON

At the moment I am working on a script that I would have done some fourteen years back, called *Henna*. The inspiration for the film came from a famous couplet: *Kya akal aati hai basher to thokaren khane ke baad, aur rang lati hai henna, pathar par pis jane ke baad* (A person learns from the trials and tribulations he goes through, the same way henna gives its colour after it has been crushed).

Henna is a story of human relationships…about two nations which were one, whose waters were one till poison was dropped into them. The story is built around a river, the Jhelum, that starts in India and flows into Pakistan. This part of the country is Hindu, but the moment you go to that part, it becomes Muslim. Why? Because man has divided it. But can you divide love? This is the kind of film that I want to make. It is a beautiful document of human values, it deals with the shared values of all sensible people, no matter who they are, what caste, religion, country, language. They are God's people. They are kind people and they can love. This is basically the theme of the film.

R.K. Films completed production of Henna *in 1990. Raj Kapoor's eldest son, Randhir, directed the film, his second son, Rishi, played the lead role, and his youngest son, Rajiv, helped in the production.*

AWARDS

1969
Republic Day Honour, from Zakir Husain, President of India

1971
President V. V. Giri presented the Padma Bhushan for his performances & achievements in the field of cinema.

1979
Shiromani Award (The Institute of Sikh Studies, Delhi), presented by the Vice President of India

1981
Certificate of Merit in appreciation of outstanding services rendered to the cause of peace and friendship, The Soviet Land-Nehru Award Committee, Moscow

1988
Dada Saheb Phalke Award (National Film Awards)

FILM AWARDS

1952
Awara
Certificate of Merit, International Film Festival of India, Bombay

1955
Boot Polish
'Special mention' for acting to Baby Naaz at the Cannes Film Festival; Award for music to Shanker-Jaikishen at the South East Asian Film Festival

1957
Jagte Raho
The Grand Prix at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival

1954
Boot Polish
Best Picture, Best Supporting Actor, Best Cinematography, Filmfare Awards

1955
Shree 420
Regional Certificate of Merit, National Film Awards

1956
Ek Din Ratre
Certificate of Merit in the Regional (Bengali) Category, National Film Awards

1956
Shree 420
Best Photography, Best Editor, Filmfare Awards

1959
Anari
Best Actor, Filmfare Awards

1961
Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai
Certificate of Merit in the Regional (Hindi)

Category, National Film Awards; Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Art Direction, Best Editing, Filmfare Awards

1964

Sangam

Best Director, Best Actress, Best Sound Recordist, Best Editor, Filmfare Awards; Certificate of Merit for the Best Edite Film, Association of Film Editors, Bombay

1971

Mera Naam Joker

Best Child Artist, Best Cinematography (Colour), Best Male Playback Singer, National Film Awards; Best Director, Best Music, Best Cinematography, Best Sound Recordist, Best Playback Singer (Male), Filmfare Awards

1973

Bobby

Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Art Direction (Colour), Best Sound Recordist, Best Playback Singer (Male), Filmfare Awards; Best Director, The Film Fans Association, Madras; Certificate of Merit for Best Direction, The Indian Film Directors Association, Bombay; Superb Direction, *Shama*, Urdu film magazine; All Time Best Film, The Filmgoers Association, Bombay

1974

Award for 'Meritorious service rendered to the Renaissance of youth consciousness in Indian culture through films over a period of three decades', Nana Chudasama of Giants International, Bombay

1975

Do Jasoos

Best Character Actor, The Andhra Pradesh Film Journalists Association, Vijayawada

1978

Satyam Shivam Sundaram

Best Music, Best Cinematography , Filmfare Awards

1982

Prem Rog

Best Director, Best Actress, Best Editor, Best Lyricist, Filmfare Awards

1985

Ram Teri Ganga Maili

Best Picture, Best Director, Best Music, Best Art Direction, Filmfare Awards

ANARI
HAR DIL HAR RAHEN
K.A. ABBAS
CHHALIA
CHORI CHORI
DIL KI RANI
DULHA

FILMOGRAPHY

1935

INQUILAB

Director: Debaki Bose. Cast: Durga Khote, K.C. Dey, Prithviraj, Nawab, Raj Kapoor (as child artist) e.a.

1943

GAURI

Director: Kidar Sharma. Cast: Shamim, Prithviraj, Monica Desai, Raj Kapoor.

HAMARI BAAT

Director: M.I. Dharamsi. Cast: Devika Rani, Jairaj, David, Shah Nawaz, Raj Kapoor e.a.

1946

VALMIKI

Director: Bhalji Pendharkar. Cast: Shanta Apte, Prithviraj, Neela, Baburao Pendharkar, Raj Kapoor e.a.

1947

CHITTOR VIJAY

Director: Mohan Sinha. Cast: Madhubala, Surendra, Wasti, Monica Devi, Raj Kapoor e.a.

DIL KI RANI

Director: Mohan Sinha. Cast: Madhubala, Shyam, Badri Prasad, Munshi Khanjer, Raj Kapoor.

NEEL KAMAL

Director: Kidar Sharma. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Begum Para, Madhubala, Rajendra e.a.

JAIL YATRA

Director: G. Jagirdar. Cast: Jagirdar, Raj Kapoor, Kamini Kaushal, Harish, Vikram Kapoor, badri Prasad e.a.

1948

AAG

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Nigar, Kamini Kaushal, Premnath e.a.

AMAR PREM

Director: N.M. Kelkar. Cast: Madhubala, Raj Kapoor, Alka Rani, Nimbalkar, Madhav Kale.

GOPINATH

Director: Mahesh Kaul. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Tripti Mitra, Nandkishore

1949

ANDAZ

Director: Mehboob. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Dilip Kumar, V.H. Desai, Cuckoo e.a.

BARSAAT

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Nimmi, Premnath, K.N. Singh e.a.

PARIVARTAN

Director: N.R. Acharya. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Motilal, Anjali Devi, Moni Chatterjee, Vasant Malini e.a.

SUNHERE DIN

Director: Satish Nigam. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Rehana, Nigar, Haroon, Heera Sawant e.a.

1950

BHANWRA

Director: G. Rakesh. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nimmi, Lalita Pawar, K.N. Singh, Hiralal, Sunder, Ratan Kumar.

BAWRE NAIN

Director: Kidar Sharma. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Geeta Bali, Vijaylaxmi, Jaswant, Pesi Patel e.a.

DASTAAN

Director: A. R. Kardar. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Suraiya, Al Nasir, Suresh, Pratima Devi, Shakila, Murad.

JAN PAHCHAN

Director: Fali Mistrey. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Jeeevan, Shyama, Dulari, Amar, Mukri.

PYAR

Director: V.M. Vyas. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Yakub, Gulam, Shyama, Nawab, Neela, Kesri, W.M. Khan.

SARGAM

Director: P.L. Santoshi. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Rehana, Om Prakash, David, Baby Tabassum, Paro, Radhakishen e.a.

1951

AWARA

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, K.N. Singh, Leela Chitnis, Prithviraj e.a.

1952

AMBER

Director: Jayant Desai. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Agha, Baby Tanuja, Ramesh Sinha, Bipin Gupta e.a.

ANHONEE

Director: K.A. Abbas. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Agha, Om Prakash, David, Achla Sachdev e.a.

ASHIANA

Director: B. Trilochan. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Mohna.

BEWAFA

Director: M.L. Anand. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Ashok Kumar, Neelam, Siddiqui.

1953

AAH

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Director: Raja Nawathe. Cast: Raj kapoor, Nargis, Vijaylaxmi, Pran, Mukesh, Ramesh Sinha, Bhupendra Kapoor, Leela Mishra.

DHUN

Director: Kumar. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Motilal, Kumar, Pramilla, Kamal Mehra e.a.

PAPI

Director: Chandulal Shah. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Dulari, P. Kailsah, Maruti, Ramesh Thakur a.e.

1954

BOOT POLISH

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Director: Prakash Arora. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Baby Naaz, Ratan Kumar, David, Veena e.a.

1955

SHREE 420

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Nadira, Lalita Pawar, Bhudo Advani, M. Kumar, Hari Shivdasani, Nana Palsikar e.a.

1956

CHORI CHORI

Director: Anant Thakur. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nargis, Johnny Walker, Pran, Gope, Amir Bano e.a.

JAGTE RAHO

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Directors: S. Mitra & A. Moitra. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Pradeep Kumar, Sumitra Devi, Smriti Biswas, Pahari Sanyal, Sulochana Chatterjee e.a.

1957

AB DILLI DUR NAHIN

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Director: Amar Kumar. Cast: Romi, Sulochana, Yakub, Anwar, Motilal e.a.

SHARDA

Director: L.V. Prasad. Cast: Raj Kapoor, meena Kumari, Shyama, Anita guha, Agha, Raj Mehra e.a.

1958

PARVARISH

Director: S. Banerjee. Cast: Raj

Kapoor, mala Sinha, Mehmood, Lalita Pawar, Radhakishen

PHIR SUBAH HOGI

Director: Ramesh Saigal. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Mala Sinha, Rehman, Leela Chitnis, Mubarak e.a.

1959

ANARI

Director: Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nutan, Lalita Pawar, Motilal, Shubha Khote, Mukri e.a.

CHAR DIL CHAR RAHEN

Director : K.A. Abbas. Cast : Raj Kapoor,
Meena Kumari, Ajit, Nimmi, Shammi Kapoor, Kum Kum e.a.

DO USTAD

Director: Tara Harish. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Madhubala, Shaikh Mukhtar, Sulochana, Daisy Irani

KANHAIYA

Director: Om Prakash. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nutan, Om Prakash Raj Mehra, lalita Pawar, Raaj Kumar.

MAIN NASHE MEIN HOON

Director: Naresh Saigal. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Mala Sinha, Mubarak, Nishi, Dhumal, Maruti.

1960

CHHALIA

Director: Manmohan Desai. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Nutan, Pran, Rehman, Shobhana Samarth, Raja.

JIS DESH MEIN GANGA BEHTI HAI

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Director: Radhu Karmaker. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Padmini, Pran, Tiwari, Nayampalli, Chanchal, Raj Mehra, Lalita Pawar e.a.

SHRIMAN SATYAWADI

Director: S.M. Abbas. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Shakila, Mehmood, Nazir Hussain e.a.

1961

NAZRANA

Director: Shridhar. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Vyjayanthimala, Usha Kiran, Agha, Savita Chatterjee

1962

AASHIQ

Director: Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Padmini, Nanda, Abhi Bhattacharya, Mukri, Leela Chitnis e.a.

1963

DIL HI TO HAI

Directors: P.L. Santoshi & C.L. Rawal. Cast: Raj kapoor, Nutan, Agha, Pran, Savita Chatterjee e.a.

EK DIL SAU AFSANE

Director: R. C. Talwar. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Waheeda Rehman, Lalita Pawar, Sulochana Chatterjee e.a.

1964

DULHA DULHAN

Director: Ravindra Dave. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Sadhana, Agha, K.N. Singh e.a.

SANGAM

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Raj kapoor, Vyjayanthimala, Rajendra Kumar, Raj Mehra, Nana Palsikar

1965

TEESRI KASAM

Director: Basu Bhattacharya. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Waheeda Rehman, Dulari, Iftekhar, Asit Sen e.a.

1967

AROUND THE WORLD

Director: Pachhi. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Rajshree, Pran, Raj Mehmood, Om Prakash e.a.

DIWANA

Director: Mahesh Kaul. Cast: Raj kapoor, Saira Banu, Kanhaiyalal, Lalita Pawar, Kamal Kapoor, Ulhas, Ravindra Kapoor e.a.

1968

SPANON KA SAUDAGAR

Director: Mahesh Kaul. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Hema Malini, Jayant, Tanuja, Achla Sachdev e.a.

1970

MERA NAAM JOKER

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Raj kapoor, Padmini, Ksenia Ryabinkyna, Simi Garewal, Rishi Kapoor e.a.

1971

KAL AAJ AUR KAL

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Director: Randhir Kapoor. Cast: Prithviraj Kapoor, Raj Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Babita.

1973

BOBBY

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Rishi Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia, Pran, Premnath, Prem Chopra, Aruna Irani.

MERA DESH MERA DHARAM

Director: Dara Singh. Cast: Raj kapoor, Dara Singh, Meena Rai.

1975

DHARAM KARAM

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Director: Randhir Kapoor. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Rekha.

DO JASOOS

Director: Naresh Kumar. Cast: Raj kapoor, Rajendra Kumar, Shailendra Singh, Bhavna Bhatt.

1976

KHAN DOST

Director: Dulal Guha. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Shatrughan Sinha, Mithu Mukherejee.

1977

CHANDI SONA

Director: Sanjay Khan. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Sanjay Khan, Parveen Babi.

1978

NAUKRI

Director: Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Rajesh Khanna, Deven Verma.

SATYAM SHIVAM SUNDARAM

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Shashi Kapoor, Zeenat Aman, Padmini Kolhapure.

1980

ABDULLAH

Director: Sanjay Khan. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Sanjay Khan, Zeenat Aman.

1981

BIWI-O-BIWI

Producer: Raj Kapoor. Director: Rahul Rawail. Cast: Sanjeev Kumar, Randhir Kapoor, Poonam Dhillon.

1982

GOPICHAND JASOOS

Director: Naresh Kumar. Caste: Raj Kapoor, Zeenat Aman, Prem Chopra, I..S. Johar.

PREM ROG

Producer-director: Raj Kapoor, Padmini Kolhapure, Shammi Kapoor, Raza Murad e.a.

VAKIL BABOO

Director: Asit Sen. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Zeenat Aman, Raakesh Roshan.

1985

RAM TERI GANGA MAILI

Producer: Randhir Kapoor, Director: Raj Kapoor. Cast: Rajiv Kapoor, Mandakini, Divya Rana, Saeed Jaffrey, Raza Murad, Kulbhushan Kharbanda.

CHOR MANDALI

Director: C.L. Rawal. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Asha Parekh. Filmed, but not released.

UMEED

Director: Naresh Saigal. Cast: Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, Pooja Saxena. Partly filmed

HENNA

Director: Randhir Kapoor. Cast: Rishi Kapoor, Zeba Bakhtiar.

KANHAIYA
NAZRANA
Neel Kamal
PARVARISH
TEESRI KASAM
Gopinath

TRIBUTES

Devanand

Raj Kapoor is not dead. He has immortalized himself through his work, his unparalleled contribution to the film industry. He will live for ever in the hearts and minds of his audience. People will always imagine him sitting in the front row of the show business hall of fame, and they will always see him smiling and laughing with pride. He died with his boots on, taking his last award. May his soul rest in peace, and may his family find solace in the fact that Raj Kapoor died so appropriately.

Amitabh Bachchan

It is difficult to write something about a man who through his creativity and temperament gave new expression to life. His work behind the camera, of course, is now legendary - his craft and dedication were unprecedented and set new trends. But in front of the camera, too, he was exceptional. If ever anyone lived life to its fullest, it was Raj-ji. He lived and worked with a zest that was unique. He had the capacity to walk into a room and lift the level of exuberance to unimaginable heights.

It was the same exuberance that was reflected in his films. He continuously thought big. His imagination knew no bounds - it was grand, sensitive and joyous. He carried with him, all the time, an undaunted spirit and a rare passion for life. Many a mortal could have survived a lifetime merely by walking past him and picking up a minuscule portion of his spirit and energy.

It was through the great Prithviraj-ji that we first learnt of his son Raj Kapoor. Prithviraj-ji, or Papaji, as he was fondly called, and my father shared a relationship of mutual admiration. My father loved his theatre; Papaji loved my father's poetry. I first met Raj-ji at R.K. Studios in 1960. I was a visitor to Bombay, curious to see what a film shooting looked like. And I still remember the massive railway platform set, train and all, that had been put up on the famous Floor No. 1, where the great Raj Kapoor was shooting. From that day on, and through my own subsequent journey in filmdom, Raj-ji always treated me with compassion, almost as if we were family. Maybe it was due to the relationship our fathers enjoyed. Or maybe it was premonition: his grandson Nikhil, son of Ritu, his eldest daughter, married my daughter Shweta; and even as I write, we prepare for the wedding of his granddaughter, Karishma, eldest daughter of his son Randhir, with my son Abhishek.

Raj Kapoor was a special human being. He has left the world of Indian cinema a contribution that cannot be replicated. For his daughter Ritu to commemorate him through this book is the most commendable gesture any daughter can perform. You need a special daughter to do this.

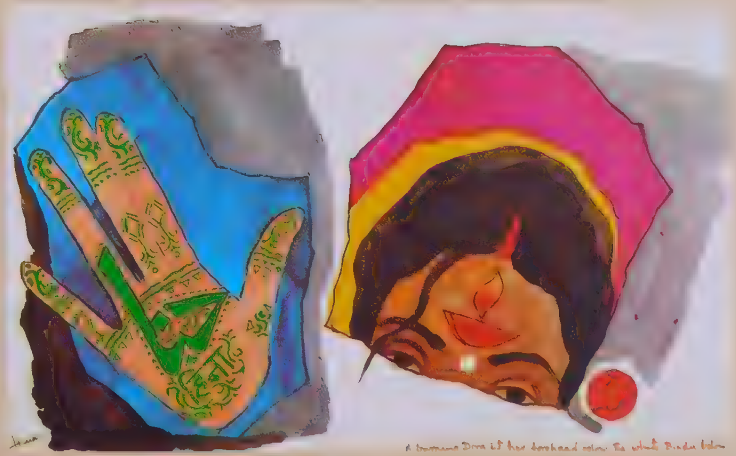
M.F. Husain

Raj Kapoor was always surrounded by a multitude of fans; even so, he never lost sight of his goal or his foresight. Many years ago, while he was enterting the cinema hall for the premier of his film *Jagte Raho*, thousands milled around seeking his autograph. I happened to be in the crowd. From a distance I shouted, 'Raj sahib, can I have your autograph too?' He replied instantly, 'Husain, do you need to? Your day will come too.'

(*As a tribute, M. F. Hussain produced twelve graphics on the film* Henna, *the last film Raj Kapoor started and which was completed after his death by his sons.*)

J.P. Chowksey

In the golden era of Indian politics, we had a large number of great leaders, but Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the most loved by the masses. Similarly, in the golden era of Indian cinema, we had a large number of talented film-makers, but Raj Kapoor was and remains the most loved by the masses. It is difficult to describe this chemistry of love and success that marked the lives of these two great men. It is strange that both Nehru and Raj Kapoor looked like Europeans and yet established an unusual rapport with the Indian people. Perhaps it was simply their extraordinary capacity to love and be loved.



Raj Kapoor made films as a passionate lover. His films were his love letters to his audience, and they too accepted them with love. They never raised questions about the films or tried to apply logic to them. They protected his films from critical analysis. His films were made in the hearts of his audience.

Raj Kapoor's greatest contribution to Indian cinema is his style of combining reality with fiction. His films are based on reality but the entire presentation is like an opera, and the audience is lost in a trance. He made epics on human vulnerability. He never filmed the lives of great warriors, kings or saints. He always projected common men with all their weakness and strength of love. This is why Raj Kapoor is immortal, and why he continues to inspire the best film-makers of the present generation.

Nitin Mukesh

Whatever little I have achieved in my life started with Raj Kapoor. Raj uncle didn't even know that I am a singer. He just knew that I am Mukesh's son, who is fond of singing - he had not even heard me sing - but he decided that come what may, he would have a song recorded in my voice for *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, the film that he was shooting when my father died. He had to work very hard on me, which he did with amazing patience and love. And so I acquired an identity of my own - I was not just Mukesh's son, but Nitin Mukesh, somebody who had sung for Raj Kapoor, for R.K. Films. This helped me a lot; I could now hike my rate.

Three months after Papa died, an association agreed to do a show of mine in Papa's memory, but they would pay me a handsome amount only if Raj Kapoor came as the chief guest. Raj uncle was busy shooting, but when I told him what they were offering me, enough to keep the kitchen fires burning for at least a year in my family, Raj uncle cancelled his shooting and came down. This ensured that the entire industry - actors, stars, and music directors - came for the show and it was a great success. That episode gave me a lot of confidence. This is how Raj Kapoor directly affected the fortunes of the Mukesh family.

Yash Chopra

I have been a great fan of Raj Kapoor's since my college days, when I saw his first film, *Aag*. It made a great impression on me. I remember one particular dialogue from the film: 'A hundred years ago, when I was ten years old...' That line still haunts me. Each time I think of making a film, I feel I should make *Aag* - and Raj-ji was so young when he made that film!

I remember when *Awara* was released. Those days films were not released on the same day all over the country. I used to live in Jallundhar and the film was releasing in Delhi. We went to Delhi by the night train to see it - first day, first show.

Raj Kapoor was a passionate film-maker. Every film of his was a milestone in film-making; he was in every sense a showman. Unlike today's film-makers, his work had the deepest roots in our tradition, he always thought Indian, yet he made films much ahead of their time, thematically and technically.

People call me a romantic director, a director of human emotions, but no film director has been able to portray passion in his or her films as Raj Kapoor did. All my inspiration comes from Raj-ji. I remember I had made a film called *Silsila* with a lot of passion. I thought it was a great film, but it didn't do as well as I had expected it to. I was depressed, and didn't feel like going anywhere or meeting anybody. There was a wedding function that I couldn't avoid, and there I met Raj Kapoor. He walked up to me and said, 'You have made a brilliant film, but you made some mistakes. Every film-maker makes mistakes, or we would be gods...Your mistake was that you made your heroine pregnant before her marriage, when she was carrying a different image with the public...this fact could not be accepted by the public.'

Then he gave me a compliment, which remains the greatest compliment I have ever received. He said, 'I have also gone to Amsterdam and shot tulips in the same gardens and fields where you have shot...but I must say that in your shots and in your concept you brought poetry into those tulips. Don't ever change your style...your sensibility. My wife Krishna is a great fan of yours. After my films, she says, she likes only your films.' I was overwhelmed and my eyes were heavy with tears. I had to leave the party. I realized that our job is to make films. We cannot control the destiny of the film. Audiences are never wrong...we are wrong. From the next day I was a new man and I started planning my next project.

We had gone to the Tashkent film festival in USSR in 1976. It was a memorable trip for us. I have attended many festivals but I have never seen anybody from India being treated like a real king of the soil in another country. There were 480 delegates. For everybody there was the special bus, Raj Kapoor alone was given a private car and an interpreter. We all had to register and get our coupons for lunch and dinner, but there was no coupon system for Raj Kapoor. We took an overnight train from Tashkent to Samarkhand. Raj Kapoor was the only one with a compartment to himself. When we reached Samarkhand in the morning, it was a sight to behold! The whole city had come to receive him! At the function at night, they only sang songs from his films. Later, we were to take a flight to Moscow, and Raj Kapoor asked us to wait while he went to a hotel and got biryani and kebabs packed for lunch. We reached the airport late, but of course the flight was waiting for Raj Kapoor!

A good film needs no language. Even if you don't know the language and you follow the film, you weep and you laugh with the characters, that's a good film. A great film-maker should be able to communicate without words. Raj Kapoor did that.

Karan Johar

Hit films of the nineties, the decade in which we didn't have Raj Kapoor, show huge influences of Raj Kapoor. He has been a source of inspiration to so many, that it is not only his family but also many film-makers in the industry who continue to keep the spirit of Raj Kapoor alive.

He is a one-man school of cinema that has been studied so very closely by so many people. His cinema is often divided into two parts: the vintage Raj Kapoor, comprising very critic-friendly classics of the black-and-white era, from *Aag* and *Awara* to *Jagte Raho*; and the post-vintage Raj Kapoor, the phase that produced films like *Bobby* and *Sangam*. Many have said that vintage Raj Kapoor was far superior and made some of the greatest contributions to Indian cinema. The second phase is generally regarded as mass audience-friendly. Raj Kapoor, therefore, is that rare film-maker who combines both art and entertainment in his work. From critics to the lay audience, everybody has an opinion on his films.

I believe it was Raj Kapoor who introduced opulence on celluloid. Grand sets, the way he shot havelis - that did not happen before him. And he presented his women in such a manner that he made them look impossibly desirable. He is also the only film-maker who used the trolley - charging towards a character - in such an effective way, using the camera masterfully in scenes of emotional confrontation. We film-makers call it the 'Raj Kapoor trolley'. The concept of extravaganza, the concept of taking top shots in cinema, also comes from Raj Kapoor.

The most effective method he used was the apparent contradiction of filming subtle emotions against a backdrop of opulence, as in *Prem Rog* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*. Every time you see a film of his that looks big and grand, the emotions are not theatrical, and yet they are amazingly effective. I can never forget a little scene of *Prem Rog*. A thorn pricks the heroine's foot. The hero tries to take it out, but she keeps herself away as she is a widow. He persists, and she says, '*Bahut zid karne lage ho, Dev* (You have become very stubborn).' He replies, '*Tumne jo karni chhod di* (Because you have stopped being stubborn).' This one line conveyed the entire gamut of emotions with subtlety. This was the brilliance of Raj Kapoor.

You can't really explain Raj Kapoor, you just have to experience him! Every time you watch a film by him, it is an experience. He wove everything together – drama, emotions, music. You can pick any one of his films, and each one is a gem. You can't better him. If you are filming a love-triangle, you go back to *Sangam*. For a young love story, go back to *Bobby*. In *Awara* he made the mother of all father-son confrontation dramas. When I was shooting *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*, I went back to *Awara*. Raj Kapoor's work is like the Bible for most filmmakers.

Ketan Desai

My father Manmohan Desai worshipped the ground on which Raj Kapoor walked. He started his career at the age of twenty by directing Raj-ji in *Chhalia*. Raj Kapoor had then predicted that Manmohan Desai would be a great director and filmmaker, which he became.

When my father was scripting his film *Naseeb*, he had an idea, of a film party on screen where a whole lot of film personalities would attend. My father wanted me to approach Raj-ji and ask him to be a guest artist in that sequence. I mustered all my courage, made an appointment and went to see him. His response was: 'Manmohan Desai could have told me on the phone and I would have reached the sets.' I was stunned. And because of him, all the other artists came for the sequence which is still talked about in the industry as one of the best highlights of any movie.

At the shooting of the sequence, my father was worried as to how he would coordinate the shooting with so many stars. Raj-ji understood, and said, 'Manmohan, I am the class monitor for this school and this event. You don't have to worry about any actor.' And he handled that, even arriving early on the sets to ensure all the other actors, following their senior's example, arrived on time!

Once when we were shooting at R.K. Studios, Raj-ji as a courtesy visited our sets. This visit was at a time when we were struggling to set up a shot that would accommodate the grandeur of the set and also the stars who were performing in the shot. Raj-ji left after a few minutes and called me to his cottage. When I went there he told me to reduce the height of the camera by six inches, move back the position of the camera by two feet and change the lens to a particular type. We did as he advised and the shot was perfect!

Rahul Rawail

My greatest privilege has been working as an assistant director with Raj Kapoor. If I start talking about his command of cinema, all the pieces of advice that he gave me, it would probably take me a couple of months to finish. I will relate just one incident that should say it all.

I made a film in 1985 called *Arjun*. There was a sequence in the film that was filmed at Flora Fountain in Mumbai using seven different cameras, all concealed and placed at different spots. The idea was to stage the action, without people knowing that it was a film being shot, so that genuine reactions could be captured on screen. The sequence was shot at 1:30 in the afternoon, when the lunch-hour crowd was at its peak. This sequence could not have a re-take, so all the cameramen were instructed to zoom in or out, so that I would have a large variety of angles and magnifications to use.

The film was shown to Raj sahib at R.K.Studios. During the interval, someone asked me how many cameras I had used for the Flora Fountain sequence, and I said seven. Raj sahib immediately turned around and said, 'How come seven cameras? I saw only six angles!' This shocked me, because though we had indeed used seven cameras to shoot, one of the cameras had malfunctioned during the shoot and we were left with material from only six. From 133 cuts of different magnification, to pick out the fact that there were six cameras used, not seven, was only possible for a genius like Raj sahib..

B.J. Panchal

I was associated with Raj Kapoor as a photographer since 1947. He was a wonderful subject for any camera. Raj and all the Kapoors are natural masters of the show-biz art. They play to the gallery and to the camera.

I was treated like a family member by Raj Kapoor. I could enter his studio, his premises, his cottage at any time. He never made me feel I was an employee. He would take me to all the premiers, in Madras, Bangalore, Calcutta, Delhi, wherever. I suppose for him it was a status symbol that he had his personal photographer!

Raj was a man of deep feelings, even if he wasn't demonstrative. Once at a function in the Turf Club, I accidently put my thumb onto a live wire. I began to get electrocuted and shouted like a mad man in my agony. Everybody watched helplessly. Raj and Nargis were present, and hearing the noise, they came to see what was happening.

When he saw me, Raj jumped forward and kicked away the wire. I was saved. Later, Nargis reproached Raj, saying, 'How could you have touched a man who was being electrocuted! What if anything had to happened to you?' Raj replied, 'But that was not any man, that was Panchal!'

Vinny Ahuja

Raj Kapoor might have spent millions on his films but basically he was a very simple man who was very childlike and behaved like a common man. Sometimes we would go to small wayside south Indian restaurants to eat and just sit watching the world go by. Sometimes we went to the races together. Like children, we used to have a partnership, we would pool in Rs 500 each! He had an arrangement with a bookie who would accept our small bets. At the end of the races we used to sit in the cafeteria and settle our account, which also included the snacks that we ate!

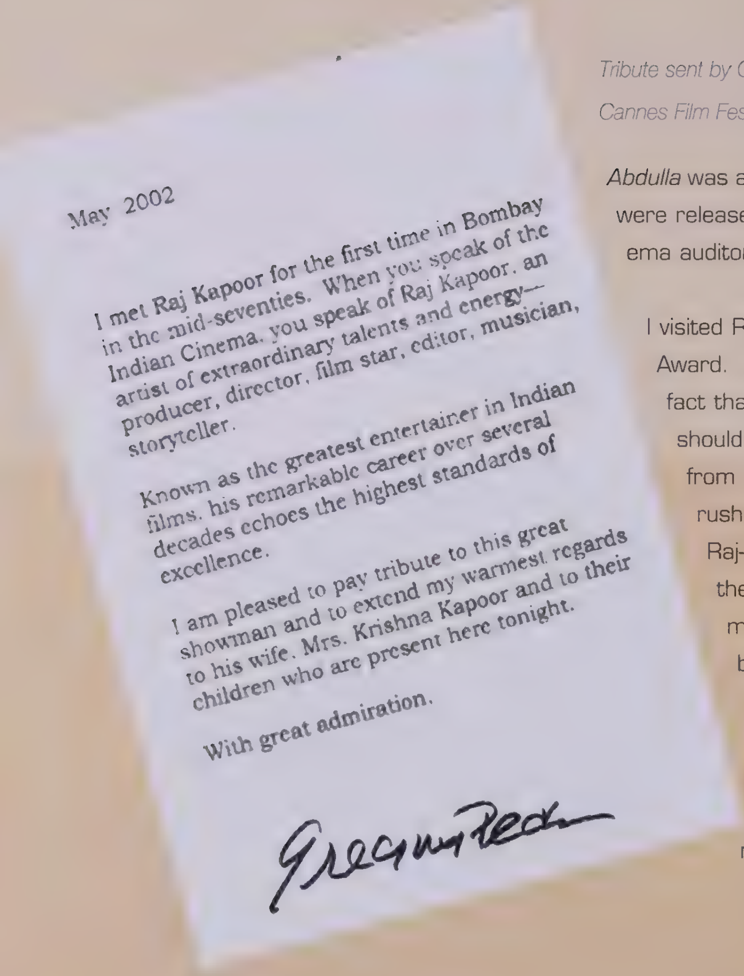
We were neighbors and we used to meet regularly, twice a week, and talk over drinks. He was at his best when he had receptive company. He talked of stories and his films. He did not need a scriptwriter or a musician to improve on what he said or the tune that he created. He explained a movie to me and later if I if I saw even a part of it on the screen, I felt that I had already seen a clearer version earlier. His expression was so perfect that by the time he produced the film some quality was lost.

He was very profound in his thinking and his philosophy had as much depth as it was simple: it was all about kindness and goodness. And these are the qualities he communicated through the medium of celluloid. Take *Awara*, or *Shree 420* - he made them fifty years ago, but the subject is as alive today as it was then!

Sanjay Khan

I go down memory lane, way back, when I was in my teens, standing at the box office window, mesmerized by the large, luminous poster of *Awara*. I saw that film twenty-two times, even selling my schoolbooks to fund the ticket. I met Raj Kapoor at the R.K Studios in Bombay for the first time through his son Randhir. I will never forget that moment when Raj Kapoor warmly embraced me. I boasted about it to my friends for several days. At that time I never imagined the great Raj Kapoor would become my close friend. I had the pleasure of directing him in a guest appearance in *Chandi Sona*, followed by the title role in my film *Abdulla*, for which he was nominated for the Filmfare Award.

Raj-ji was a true friend. I was shooting in Mauritius for a song we used in *Abdulla*. The song was to be recorded in Bombay and then sent to us for picturization. The musicians' strike was on, however, and this prevented the recording. But Raj-ji intervened, settled the musicians' problems and personally supervised the recording of the song. He brought the tape with him to Mauritius in time for us to shoot.



May 2002

I met Raj Kapoor for the first time in Bombay in the mid-seventies. When you speak of the Indian Cinema, you speak of Raj Kapoor, an artist of extraordinary talents and energy— producer, director, film star, editor, musician, storyteller.

Known as the greatest entertainer in Indian films, his remarkable career over several decades echoes the highest standards of excellence.

I am pleased to pay tribute to this great showman and to extend my warmest regards to his wife, Mrs. Krishna Kapoor and to their children who are present here tonight.

With great admiration,

Gregory Peck

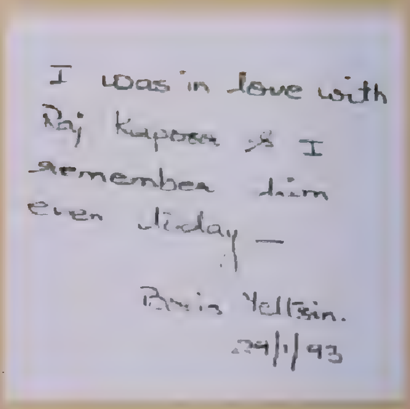
Tribute sent by Gregory Peck to be read out on the occasion of the honour bestowed on Raj Kapoor at the Cannes Film Festival in 2002.

Abdulla was a hit, and highly acclaimed at the Moscow film festival in 1982. One thousand prints were released in USSR. I remember the night when I presented Raj Kapoor at the gigantic cinema auditorium with 4000 seats, there was a standing ovation for nearly five minutes.

I visited Rajji when he was having a check up prior to his visit to Delhi to receive the Phalke Award. While chatting with me in his hospital room, he seemed quite irritated due to the fact that he did not have his favorite eau de cologne, 4711, and kept telling Krishnaji she should have kept a bottle for him. I intervened and promised to get a bottle immediately from Dubai. He left for Delhi. The next day I received the sad news of his stroke and rushed to see him along with the bottle of 4711, which had arrived by then from Dubai. Raj-ji was in a coma, so I handed over the bottle to Krishnaji. A few days later India and the world were shocked by the news of Raj Kapoor's demise. A week after the cremation, Krishnaji rang me up to say that the eau de cologne was used to anoint his body after his last bath. I was deeply moved.

Boris Yeltsin

I was in love with Raj Kapoor and I remember him even today.



I was in love with
Raj Kapoor & I
remember him
even today —

Boris Yeltsin.
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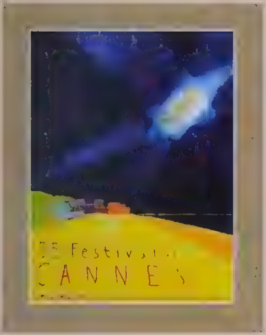

Festival
CANNES

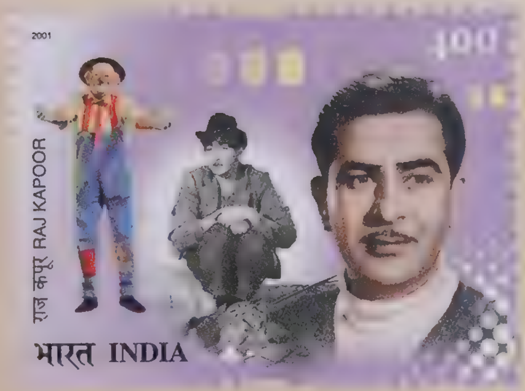
Cannes Film Festival 2002: For the first time in the history of the festival, an actor was honoured posthumously. It was also a first for any Indian actor.

Tribute by Sony Television: For an entire season, Sony Television ran a programme titled *Showman of the Millennium*, as part of which all the films produced by Raj Kapoor were shown on the network.

Documentaries on Raj Kapoor: Films Division of India produced *Raj Kapoor*, directed by Siddharth Kak; and Sony Television produced and telecast a documentary titled *Kehta Hai Joker*, directed by Bobby Bedi.

A millennium show was organized as a tribute at Wembley, London, where eminent stars performed Raj Kapoor's songs.

A commemorative stamp on Raj Kapoor was launched by the Government of India as a tribute on 14 December 2001, his 77th birth anniversary.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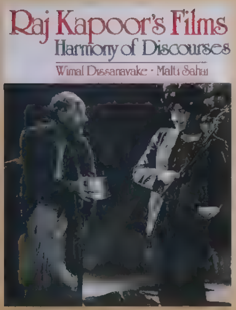
Raj Kapoor's Films
Harmony of Discourses
Wimal Dissanayake · Malti Sahai

RAJ KAPOOR
RITU NANDA

Books published on Raj Kapoor include *Raj Kapoor: The Fabulous Showman* by Bunny Rueben; *Raj Kapoor* (in Hindi) by Jayaprakash Chowksey; *Raj Kapoor's Films: Harmony of Discourses* by Malti Sahai and Vimal Dissanayake; and *Raj Kapoor: His Life and His Films* by Ritu Nanda (published in Moscow by Iskusstvo Publishers).

RKJKS RAJ KAPOOR JANA KALYAN SANSTHA

Raj Kapoor was a man of the masses; he identified himself with the masses and was always beholden to them for his popularity. In his memory, his wife and children created the Raj Kapoor Jana Kalyan Sanstha (RKJKS), a registered charitable trust, on 14 December 2001, Raj Kapoor's 77th birth anniversary.

The first programme that the trust has initiated is to help the economically weaker sections of society by offering the Janashree Bima Yojana and the Shiksha Sahayog Yojana through the Life Insurance Corporation of India. Under the insurance scheme, at a premium of just Rs 100, a person below the poverty line is insured for Rs 20,000 in case of natural death and Rs 50,000 in case of death by accident, for a period of one year. In case of disability, he or she is insured for a sum ranging from Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000. Under the Shiksha Yojana, scholarships are provided for upto two children per family from the 9th to the 12th year of education at Rs 100 per child, that is Rs 200 per month, for four years.

In its first ten months alone, RKJKS has insured over 8,000 families, settled ten death claims and provided scholarships to over 150 students. The trust has also made a donation to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness which was used to provide spectacles to over 400 children in remote villages.

The trust makes and also collects donations to sustain these programmes. All donations to the trust are eligible for income tax exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961 (vide letter no. DID (E) R-429/02/158). Cheques towards donations, from Rs 100 upwards, may be sent to the Raj Kapoor Jana Kalyan Sanstha, A-1 Friends Colony (East), New Delhi - 110065.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With reverence to my Guru Shirdi Sai Baba for giving me strength and wisdom.

I also wish to thank the following people whose help and contribution have made this venture possible:

The Times of India Group, *Indian Express*, NFDC (Mumbai), Films Division of India, *India Digest*, *Showtime*, *India Today, Mid-day, Cine-Blitz, Filmfare, Screen*, Bobby Bedi, Varsha Bedi, Yashraj Films, Sony Television and Cinevista Studios.

For providing rare personal photographs, my thanks to the Press Information Bureau of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Umi Sial, Suresh Jethva, M.E. Koor, Colour Photo Studio, Jitender Arya, R.M. Kumtakar, Kamath Brothers, Kamat Foto Flash, International News Photos, Republic Photo News Bureau, Bharat Publicity Trust, B.J. Panchal and Dipak Studios.

For narrating personal anecdotes and providing hitherto unpublished material on Raj Kapoor, I am grateful to Krishna Kapoor, Yash Chopra, Jayaprakash Chowksey, Vithal Bhai Patel, Kamal and Kuppy Khanna, Dr O.P. Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor, Rajiv Kapoor, Rima Jain, the Hindujas, Gulu Lalvani, Shammi Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan, Vishwa Mehra, Vinny Ahuja, S.S. Saini, Ashok Kaul, Nitin Mukesh, Karan Johar, Dharmesh Darshan, Ketan Desai, Rahul Rawail, Khalid Mohammed, Bunny Rueben, Malti Sahai and Munni Dhawan.

A special mention of gratitude is due to my husband Rajan Nanda for backing me and being with me on this journey through its most trying moments.

For continuous, unending support which is not always easy to list, I am grateful to Nitasha Nanda, Nikhil Nanda, Shweta Nanda, Dushyant Mehta, Suman Sehgal, Sunita Bansal, Sunny Abraham, Manoj Srivastava, Sajit, Riti Srivastava, Mangla, Pramod, Shammi Kanojia, Madan Arora and Sumeet Pasricha.

My thanks also to Aroon Porie (Living Media) for his initial inspiration and stimulus for this project.

To the many others whose inputs are too varied and diverse to list, I can only say that their help is not unrecorded in my heart. I hope that they will all share in the joy of this publication.

KAPOOR'S
NAAM
JOKER
KAL AAJ AUR KAL
RAJ KAPOOR'S
AAG
RAJ KAPOOR'S
BARSAAT
RAJ KAPOOR'S
AWARA
SHANKAR JAIKISHAN
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DHARAM KARAM
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A multimedia journey
presented by
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BIWI-O-BIWI
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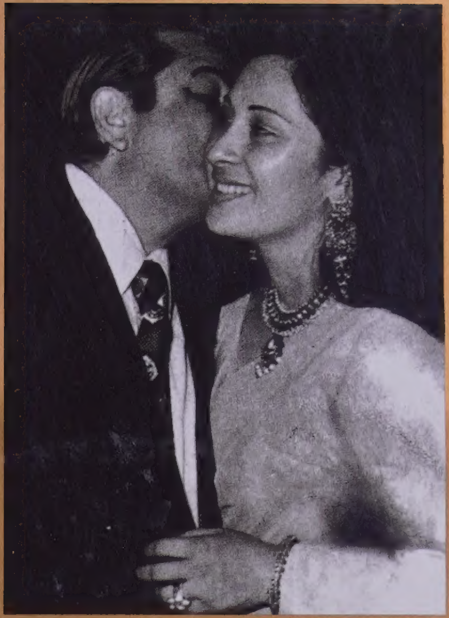

Ritu Nanda, the second child of Raj Kapoor, has been one of the leading insurance intermediaries of the Life Insurance Corporation of India for the last fourteen years and ranks among the top 1000 insurance professionals in the world. She is Chairman and CEO, ESCOLIFE, a high-technology platform created to provide service to the entire insurance sector worldwide. She is also CEO of Raksha TPA, which provides third party administrative services for health care. In 2000, she established the RNIS College of Insurance, which today has over 50 branches all over the country.

Ritu Nanda is married to the industrialist Rajan Nanda, and has two children, Nitasha and Nikhil, a daughter-in-law, Shweta, and two grand children, Navya Naveli and Agastya. She lives in New Delhi.

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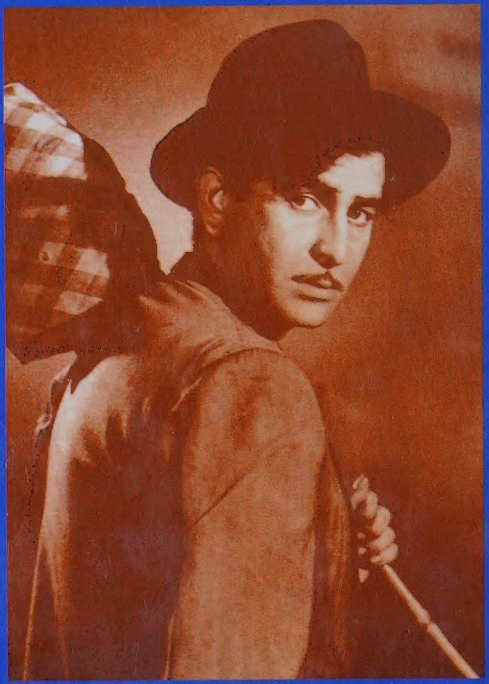

'A lot of work of every artiste, of anyone in any creative profession, is somewhat autobiographical...

Something of his experience is always attached to it, it remains there and one brings it out in one form or another.'

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